Sustainable shark diving industry is possible for Saipan » PAGE 2

Funding ceiling for CUC pipeline project increased to $8.5M. » PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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IN DEVELOPING TOURISM INDUSTRY:

'Don't put all eggs in one basket'

DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

Carrying with him a renowned and trademark message of environmental stewardship, Palau president Tommy Remengesau acknowledged yesterday the universal problem of growing island economies attempting to maintain the balancing act of controlling impacts as they try to increase revenue.

» Remengesau also stresses message of environmental stewardship

"It's a common challenge every time you promote tourism," Remengesau told reporters during a press conference yesterday afternoon at the Hyatt Regency Saipan. "Tourism being the main industry."

The president noted the tendency for promotional groups to concentrate heavily on their respective goals but that, at the

See DON'T on Page 4

FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON

Republic of Palau President Tommy Remengesau Jr. was the keynote speaker during the Marianas Tourism Education Council Tourism Summit yesterday at the Pacific Islands Club Saipan

TO BUILD CASE FOR CONGRESS AS CW PROGRAM ENDS IN 2019

Torres: CNMI needs the numbers

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

Torres

Bracing for the feared end of the contract worker program in 2019, the administration of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres unveiled plans yesterday to retool the responsibilities of cultural and indigenous offices under the Governor's Office toward hiring and training local workers—and on the U.S. federal side—build the case for a reform of local-federal tax agreements to include earned income tax credits—benefits that could incentivize workforce participation for those that fear higher incomes would disqualify them from the social safety

See TORRES on Page 4

Remengesau: Leave ocean as your legacy

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
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REPORTER

» MTEC highlights ocean conservation, tourism in Micronesia

"The ocean is the heart and soul of the islands here in Micronesia."

The importance of the ocean for the people of Micronesia was further emphasized by Palau President Tommy Remengesau Jr. during the Marianas Tourism Education Council Tourism Summit at the Pacific Islands Club Saipan yesterday with the theme "One Ocean, One Heart."

In his speech before some 300 students from the different MY WAVE Clubs of schools, Remengesau said that the ocean should be the legacy that residents of the CNMI will leave for future generations.

"If there is a legacy that each one of you would like to leave for each generation, it is the ocean, it is the environment," Remengesau said.

"The best legacy that you can leave for the next gen-

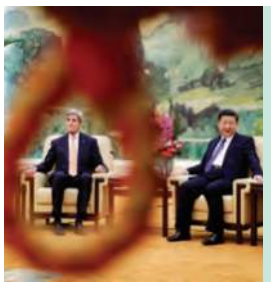
See OCEAN on Page 4

INSIDE

LOCAL

Ira Palero hopes to come back to the CNMI as a certified public accountant and start her career as an auditor.

» PAGE 8



ASIA

Top U.S. and Chinese officials sparred Wednesday over how to deal with North Korea's latest nuclear weapons test and ease tensions over territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

» PAGE 22

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Local

FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON

Pew's Global Ocean Legacy project officer Angelo O'Connor Villagomez share to students of Saipan the wonderful nature of sharks and how they can be protected through sustainable means.

Sustainable shark diving industry is possible for Saipan

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
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REPORTER

Sharks, often misunderstood and stigmatized creatures, and their economic values were brought to light at the Marianas Tourism Education Council Tourism Summit held at the Pacific Islands Club Saipan yesterday.

Angelo O'Connor Villagomez, an officer of Pew's Global Ocean Legacy project, said that about 100 million sharks are killed every year.

"We fish them faster than they can reproduce," Villagomez said, "As result of this, half of all sharks are threatened or are near-threatened."

Villagomez, who has helped the passage of more than two dozen shark conservation laws in small Pacific and Caribbean island states, shared to the hundreds of students in attendance how sharks can be protected and how they can be part of a more sustainable industry.

He also offered materials for guidelines and best practices in sustainable shark diving such as the ones featured in www.sustainablesharkdiving.com.

Villagomez said that Saipan has an opportunity to protect its sharks and have a great shark industry.

"I have been swimming in these waters for 30 years but actually diving for 10 and we've got some cool species," Villagomez said in an interview after his presentation.

He added that Saipan has whale sharks, tiger sharks, and reef sharks such as the gray, black-tip, and white-tip. There could also be sharks outside the reef such as the silky and blue sharks.

Shark diving on Saipan, he said, could be an option.

"With a little bit of investment, a little bit of work probably could develop a shark dive," Villagomez said, "It's something different to do. It's a growing part of the industry and it's definitely a niche part of the industry."

Not only would tourism benefit from this kind of activity, it could also help fishermen.

"If the CNMI were to look into feeding sharks, it's something that the fishermen could benefit from since they are the ones who will catch the fish," Villagomez said, "There could be a really great partnership where the fishermen could actually benefit from the protection of sharks."

However, there should be safeguards established also.

"It's something that the government should really look into. When you're playing with big animals, big predators, things could go wrong so the government should look into the best regulations to make sure that it is safe and sustainable," Vilagomez said.

For Villagomez, sharks are the coolest animals and they are, most of the time, what divers want to see in their natural habitat.

"We think that they're scary," Villagomez said, "They are actually not really scary. They're more afraid of you than you are of them."

"Show me somebody who's afraid of sharks and I'll show you somebody who has not been in the water with them," he added.

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Funding ceiling for CUC pipeline project increased to $8.5M

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The federal court has approved a joint request by the CNMI and U.S. governments and the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to increase the funding ceiling for the construction of the stalled CUC pipeline project to $8,482,161.

U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge David O. Carter in the same order issued on Wednesday, also granted the parties' request to increase the funding ceiling for task order 1 to $838,272. Carter's order and the parties' stipulation did not indicate the amount of the original funding ceiling for task order 1.

Task order 1 refers to Gilbane Federal's activities such as providing construction management, oversight, and court required activities on CUC projects.

Gilbane Federal is a California-based construction company mandated by the federal court to expeditiously complete some stalled CUC projects.

With respect to the CUC pipeline project, last February, Carter approved the parties' request to put a total funding ceiling of $4.6 million to the controversial project.

Last February, the U.S. Department of the Interior approved an additional funding of $2.6 million to complete the pipeline project. With such additional funds, DOI's total funding for the project would then balloon to $8.1 million since the project was initiated in 2010.

Last Nov. 13, the CNMI government submitted an amended Fiscal Year 2016 Commonwealth Improvement Projects spending plan to DOI's Office of Insular Affairs to include the $5 million funding requirement for Stipulated Order 2 (SO2) projects.

The $5 million FY 2016 grant funds will be used for the pipeline project $3,887,161, Gilbane Federal's construction management (382,225), and for cleanup, inspection and repair of Tank 103 ($730,614). OIA is currently reviewing the grant applications for the SO2 projects.

The oil pipeline project is an 8-inch aboveground receiving pipeline that delivers diesel fuel from the Mobil oil facility to CUC Power Plants 1 and 2 in Lower Base. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency had stated that until the pipeline is properly repaired or replaced, it poses a threat to the adjacent ocean.

SO2 projects refer to the decommissioning of the existing CUC pipeline and smart pigging of the new pipeline, waste management for Power Plants 1 and 2 on Saipan and Rota power plant, construction management, among others.

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DON'T

From Page 1

end of the day, it came down to a matter of "balancing out" markets, as one market can easily overtake another—"if there are no precautionary matters in place."

"We all realize the value of the Chinese market," he said. "It's very aggressive. It's coming in, and it's a good thing. But every time it grows to a situation—where it seems to be a sole provider or the sole market—then that's not a healthy thing."

Remengesau addressed Palau's recent cut down in Chinese charters flights to the island nation. He said Palau's tourist numbers would have hit 200,000 tourists—numbers that heavily tax their infrastructure—if they had not taken this route. "Palau's sewer system is made to cap at about 200,000 to 300,000," said the president. And as they are still undergoing improvement and renovations to these, they "couldn't afford to reach that maximum ceiling."

Still, even with the cutdowns, the nation still reached a record high number of 160,000 tourists—about 20,000 more than last year, he said. Palau is looking at new source markets, he said, like the European and North American market and travelers from Russia, Japan, and Korea.

"Throughout the history of the Micronesia and the region, we've seen it happen," Remengesau said, where the region "relied too much on Japan" and "it's bubble burst" and "everything fell flat."

The region has "lessons to learn" from this, he said. "… You don't put all your eggs in one basket."

The president also addressed the exit fees—reported to about $50—that Palau charges on tourist leaving the nation. He called this an important position to take to ensure they get "the right quality of tourists."

"Who respect the environment and are willing to pay the environmental impacts fee," he said, noting that these fees help fund their protected area networks. The idea is, if they protect their marine protected areas, they protect the reason tourists come to Palau.

Common challenges and casinos

Remengesau also met with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres yesterday to talk about the CNMI and Palau playing a major role in the region. He called issues faced by the CNMI, Guam, and Palau sometimes unique to each respective island but there were still domestic and regional challenges that they share. "Because we can have limited revenues, we can certainly tackle these problems efficiently by sharing our ideas," he said.

"Saipan is going through a challenge of not having enough contract workers to accomplish many of the construction projects. This is absolutely a similar situation in Palau. We have a lot of construction activities, a lot of capital improvement projects that are not being done on time because we don't have the labor force to complete them. We have a unique and common problem."

On the topic of casinos, Remengesau shared with Torres the fact that some of Palau's congressmen have been on island to look at what Saipan's casino and gaming license has done to improve the islands, he said, calling this information critical to understand "the reality" of the industry.

"A couple of years ago, Congress sent their representatives here to look at the casino legislation that Saipan was entertaining and since then it has been enacted into law and now we see the company here doing businesses," he said. "From what I'm told, there is employment happening and there has been some good, immediate impact as a result of that investment being issued a license."

Still, it would be up to the people of Palau if casinos were to be allowed in the nation, he said.

"We have taken a referendum and the message was very clear. But it's not say the issue would come up again."

"Unless I know more about it, I continue to take the stand that Palau is not ready for it," he added.

Remengesau said investments that are arriving on Palau are geared toward ecotourism such as snorkeling, diving, and bird watching—which is showing a surprise uptick—along with water sports and catch-and-release programs.

"Ecotourism seems to be a main target. As you know, we don't have a casino. There's no casino allowed in Palau. We don't have a golf course. It's really just the natural beauty of the environment right now that is the main attraction for people."

Environmental message

On his environmental message to world leaders, Remengesau said, "Responsibility is the key word." "We are born to an island community that is blessed with the natural environment. But with it comes the responsibility to also care for it and to make sure we leave it the way it is as we found it."

This is a matter of culture, traditions, and customs. "We are taught in our younger years that we have to respect the environment."

"This is not something new that you have to legislate. It's actually a tradition," he said. "Merely putting that into a policy by law is reinforcing the culture and the tradition of the land."

Palau leads participating island nations and territories in the Micronesia Challenge—where participating members are tasked with setting aside 30 percent of their near shore resources and 20 percent of their terrestrial resources for conservation by 2020.

Palau has instituted the Palau National Marine Sanctuary, which is 80 percent of its total exclusive economic zone.

The president said the latest statistics show that every member still needs to reach their target to accomplish that goal. This includes Guam, the CNMI, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. "Everyone has made progress but I still think there is some things left to do to reach that target."

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

TORRES

From Page 1

nets they enjoy.

"We cannot assume that an extension will be granted," Torres said yesterday in a speech during the Society of Human Resource Management-NMI Chapter monthly membership yesterday at the Pacific Islands Club Saipan.

The administration's moves to prepare for the impending end of the contract worker program—to ask for federal resources for worker programs, get new tax benefits, among others—will need data to stress the CNMI's needs. President Barack Obama's White House has also yet to officially green light or even respond to the request for consultation on the CW issue, and some of these plans would require statutory changes that may be tough to navigate through a polarized U.S. Congress sometimes deaf to needs of a little island chain out in the Pacific.

The plan is to get data to help Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) "build the case" in U.S. Congress, a senior administrative official said yesterday.

The official was referring to, among others, to the American Community Survey, which provides data every year to stateside communities to properly plan investments and services.

Business leader Jim Arenovski said the fact the government is putting in efforts together to address how it approaches the federal government is important. "We need to be able to have our own house in line," he said. "… We have to exhaust our local labor pool" and "exhaust and find out how what that number is. How many of the locals are eligible and can work and are willing to work."

"Once we have that information, and the negative effect our economy will be in 2019—those will be powerful numbers for any legislator, or any of the 902 [consultation] negotiators to be able to see that we need their help."

Torres' goal is to advocate for increased federal resources from the Executive Branch. This could come from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, which studies the components that contribute to gross domestic product, or the Bureau of Labor Statistics which provides data that can reveal the extent of the unemployed population.

The latest statistics the CNMI has on its demographics and population was from 2009—during the last Census—but the next set of data would be "created and released one year after we need them," Torres said.

"We do not have the necessary data," Torres said in his speech, "nor the access to data that is required to view the complete picture of the effects the end of this [contract worker] transition may bring,"

"We are working to reform the work registration requirement of our social services" to task locals to join the workforce, Torres also said, referring to the local food stamp program.

The CNMI is also statutorily ineligible to receive programs like Wagner-Peyser and Job Corps, which provides federal funding for job training and placement

These programs are "ideally suited for our situation," Torres said. "This is again a Congressional issue that Congressman Sablan has worked to rectify."

Torres urged the hiring of personnel outside CW programs; pursue seasonal visas for construction projects; and increase wages to attract local and U.S. eligible workers. This will prepare the CNMI for "whatever outcome 2019 will hold," Torres said.

"You need to hire locals," Arenovski said. "Anybody that is not at this point is missing out on a great opportunity because of a great level of opportunities.

"And as we found out just recently, the risk is a little bit lower," he said, referring to the recent delay in the processing of about 2,800 contract worker permit renewals, which forced business to cut hours and close shop.

Arenovski said that wages are a choice for each individual business to make, but as the CNMI sees the competitive nature of the labor market increase with new investments, they will see a natural increase in the hiring wage of individual companies in order to compete with some of the hotels, casinos, or some of the larger companies that are coming into the CNMI

OCEAN

From Page 1

eration is an ocean that they can come and still enjoy," he added.

Remengesau shared to the students the recent law they enacted in Palau, which established the Palau National Marine Sanctuary.

The law, signed Oct. 28 of last year, declared 80 percent of Palau waters to be a no-take reserve, while 20 percent is a protected domestic fishing zone, which Remengesau said is just enough for their local fishermen.

This became the world's sixth largest fully protected marine area.

Remengesau said it is as big as Texas and France and admitted that even he is not able to see all of them yet.

"Why do we need to conserve 80 percent of Palau's waters and oceans?" Remengasau asked.

Remengesau then enumerated food security, economic security, and cultural security.

"Scientists are telling us that fish population is already down, no longer like the old days," Remengesau said.

He added that they are doing it to sustain the use of marine resource for future generations.

"People come to the island to seek food, to see the sharks, to film, to go out there and dive and see what life has to see under the ocean," Remengesau added.

He added that he declared in Palau this year the "Year Of The Youth" wanting to teach younger generations early on the importance of the environment.

"People come to Saipan because of the environment and I want to say that the environment is the economy and the economy is the environment," Remengesau said, "The important feature of the environment of course is the ocean. After all, why do they have to come to Saipan if they have their own?"

He then compared the ocean to the mother goose which lays golden eggs, and that if the mother goose is not taken care of, there will be no more benefits to reap.

Remengesau also mentioned the need to protect sharks, which is also an important part of Palau's waters.

He said a shark is worth $1.9 million in its lifetime, but if one kills it just for its fins, then it would only be worth $40.

Former CNMI lieutenant governor Diego Benavente, who also led the anti-shark fin law in the CNMI, reiterated the importance of younger generations in influencing the leaders—such as what happened in 2009 when a sixth grade class pushed for a law to protect sharks.

"These students were so inspired that they demanded a law in the CNMI to protect sharks. Inspired by their passion, I introduced the bill," Benavente said.

'Bubble tourism'

University of Guam assistant professor of Marine Biology Dr. Peter Houk explained to the students the need to keep repeat visitors coming back to Saipan.

He said the repeat visitors keep the tourism industry going when during the times when there are no "bubble" or rise or high influx of tourists.

He said since the top activities tourists would like to do in the CNMI are related to water activities, it is important to take care of the ocean.

"The fish are really important for the ocean. They keep it clean so that when a typhoon comes through, and all the coral dies, and the algae grows, they clean the house and vacuum it all up. The reef can come back in five years," Houk said.

Houk said there is a need to plan for a balance in using the natural resources between the present and future use.

"We need to find a balance, a better balance in between the bubbles. I asked the people to think beyond the bubble," Houk said.

For MTEC chair Vicky Benevente, she wants to inspire the students and instill in them the importance of taking care of the environment.

Aside from the speakers, various agencies and organizations also provided hands-on demonstrations at breakout stations during the summit such as the Micronesia Islands Nature Alliance, Division of Fish and Wildlife, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Commonwealth Council for Arts& Culture, BECQ/Coastal Resources Management, Northern Marianas College CREES, Northern Marianas Humanities Council, and the Marianas Visitors Authority.

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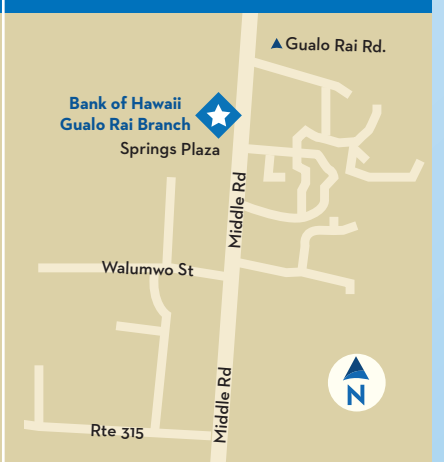
One lucky recipient will receive a $250 Bubba Gump gift card inside the tote! **The first 100 visitors to our new location will receive a Free Bank of Hawaii tote.** Limit one tote bag per visitor. Gift card will be placed in one of the 100 tote bags at random. No purchase or account opening necessary to receive a tote bag or to win. Void where prohibited. Quantity limited. Approximate retail value of prize is $250. Only one $250 prize will be awarded. Must be 18 years or older to receive a tote bag. Odds of receiving a tote bag and winning the prize depend upon the number of visitors.	Be one of the first 100 people at the Gualo Rai Branch to open any Personal Checking account, and receive a $10 Shell gas card*! *Offer only available at the new Bank of Hawaii Gualo Rai Branch. Certain requirements and restrictions apply. $10 Shell gas card will be awarded at account opening. Offer good till 3/31/2016 or while supplies last. One gas card per customer and per account. Offer not valid for existing accounts. Minimum opening deposit requirements may vary. No cash value. Not combinable with other offers.	Bankohana Receive a $20 Bubba Gump gift card* when you open a new personal Bankohana Checking account with $500 or more! *Offer only available at the new Bank of Hawaii Gualo Rai Branch. Certain requirements and restrictions apply. $20 Bubba Gump gift card will be awarded at account opening for new Bankohana Checking accounts with a minimum opening deposit of $500 or more. Variable Rate Annual Percentage Yield for Bankohana Level I is 0.02% ($1 and higher) for Bankohana Level II is 0.02% ($1 to $9,999) and 0.03% ($10,000 and higher) for Bankohana Level III is 0.02% ($1 to $4,999), 0.03% ($5,000-$9,999), 0.04% ($10,000-$49,999), and 0.05% ($50,000 and higher). APYs accurate as of 10/13/2015 and subject to change without notice. Fees may reduce earnings on the account. Offer good till 3/31/2016 or while supplies last. One gift card per customer and per account. Offer not valid for existing accounts. Not applicable to Bankohana for Business accounts. No cash value. Not combinable with other offers.	

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UOG Magna Cum Laude aims to become an auditor

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Ira Palero hopes to come back to the CNMI as a certified public accountant and start her career as an auditor. She just finished her four-year journey at the University of Guam graduating Magna Cum Laude when she earned her Bachelors in Business Administration major in Accountancy.

Palero, who is on vacation after finishing her course last Dec. 20, said she will be returning to Guam to begin her review for the CPA board exams—a four-part test given by the Guam Board of Accountancy that deals with business, financial regulation, taxation and auditing.

"I'll stay in Guam until I passed the exams, I promised that to myself. I would also check several universities that have an online degree program so I could get my Masters degree," said Palero, who moved with her sister and friend in Guam in 2011.

"But first, I have to play in a basketball championship game [tomorrow]. I'm playing with Sun Palace together with Irish [Pagarao] and Angie [Ito]. We're playing against Lob City," added the 22-year-old, who remains loyal to her first sport but also plays soccer by being one of the first members of Shirley's Football Club.

When her father, Ernesto, died in 2012, her sister Joan had to go back to Saipan to help their mother, Rose, manage the family auto repair shop in Garapan. Palero therefore was left alone studying in Guam.

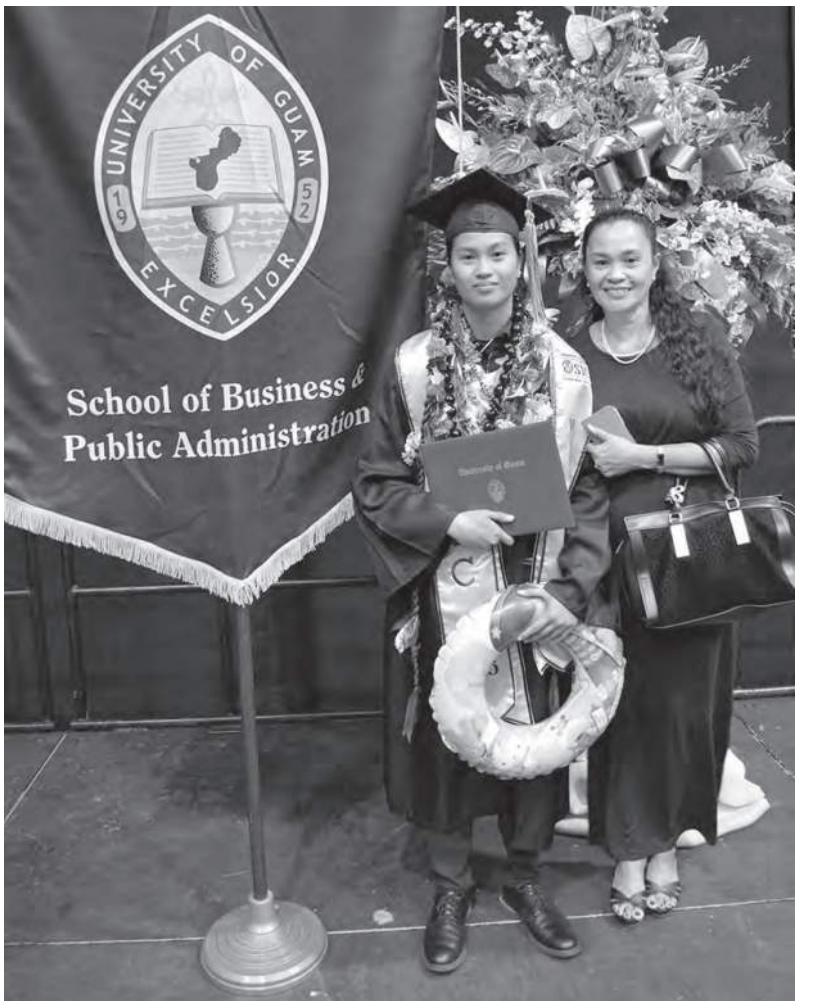
She said that she used her father's death and the advise of businessman/sports patron Jerry Tan as her inspiration in the last three years she spent at UOG. "I told my dad that I'm going to finish what I started and graduate. My parents have always been supportive to me. Also, Jerry became one of my role models because of what he does in the CNMI community."

Palero, who has a 3.80 GPA, said she even used Tan as a reference for her college success class at UOG. "He was also a Magna Cum Laude at UOG with a double major in accounting and management. He is a real down-to-earth person and I'm thankful for everything that he's done to help me."

"Jerry's classmates went to study in U.S. universities after graduating high school but he stayed in Guam. And one time, he told me 'it's not where you go but always think of what you can do.'"

She said that Tan recruited her from basketball to try soccer and be part of Shirley's FC that was just being formed back then together with Pagarao. "For me it's easier to transition playing basketball to soccer than the other way around. I've played basketball my high school year and even winning a title in my senior year."

Palero said she is also considering becoming a stockbroker after becoming a member of the Student Investment Club at UOG. "UOG allocates $50,000 for us to invest in the stock market. So we learned what risk to take and what's the best time to sell and the best time to buy stocks."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Ira Palero, left, and mother Rose are all smiles during her graduation last month at the University of Guam. Palero graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree major in Accountancy.

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Propst: CNMI has no animal protection laws

JON PEREZ

Saipan Cares for Animals, CNMI president Jayson Hudy speaks during yesterday's meeting with the Soroptimist International of Northern Mariana Islands at the Giovanni's of the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI is dead last among the 56 U.S. states and territories when it comes to animal protection laws based on a 2015 study by the Animal Legal Defense Fund and Rep. Edwin K. Propst (Ind.-Saipan) is hoping to turn that around.

Speaking during a program meeting by the Soroptimist International of Northern Mariana Islands with the Saipan Cares for Animals, CNMI, Propst said an animal cruelty bill was first introduced more than a decade ago but failed to gain momentum.

Former Pet Assistance and Welfare Services secretary-treasurer Bobbie Grizzard added that an animal protection bill was also filed several times but did not push through. Similar bills were introduced from the 13th to 16th legislature but it just gathered dust.

Former representative Stanley T. Torres also filed a similar bill, House Bill 17-35, in 2010 but after the bill passed in the 17th House of Representatives, no more action was done.

An animal protection law would criminalize any unnecessary harm or killing of an animal in the CNMI. If it becomes a law, it would give penalties for animal abuse or torture, neglect, and pet theft.

Propst said that Rep. Edwin P. Aldan (Ind.-Tinian), the House Committee on Natural Resources chairman, assured him that his bill would be up for discussion.

"That's why I'm asking all animal lovers to show their support once the bill gains ground. It will be up for debate and discussion, then if it passes the House it will move to the Senate and I believe it would be smooth sailing from there," said Propst.

SCA, which took over the non-profit status of PAWS late last year, is supporting Propst's bill as it would help them to further educate the community in the humane treatment of animals.

SCA, the Humane Society International, and several other volunteers are currently assisting the Saipan Mayor's Office's Animal Control Office in taking care of the 57 dogs left at the animal shelter in Lower Base.

"We could not have done it without the support Mayor [David M.] Apatang. We also received a ton of support from the community and to people from the states who have been sending food, leashes and other equipment to help us take care of these animals," said SCA president Jason Huddy.

"We are now waiting for the shelter to be renovated since it is really in bad shape right now after the Typhoon. We heard that the money is there and hopefully the process for the renovation would get moving."

He added that Guam veterinarians Dr. Jennifer Landis and veterinarian technician Bambi Leone has been spaying and neutering dogs since Jan. 4 and they are also holding pet vaccinations every Saturday from 2pm to 6pm at a cost of $30.

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Steak Combo
Mahi or Salmon 6oz Tender Loin with Soup $32
Rib Eye 14oz. with Corn Soup $35
Two Side Dishes of Choice: Baked Potato Loaded/Broccoli/Corn/Rice
Choice of sauce: Sunshine/Bernaise/Demiglaze
RIBS
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Full Slab 10-12 bones $30
Baby Back Ribs 9-10 bones $28
Half Baby Back Ribs 6-7 bones $16
Full Slab Spare Ribs 10-12 bones $27
Half Slab Spare Ribs 5-6 bones $15
Two side dishes of choice: Baked Potato Loaded/Broccoli/Corn/Rice
Choice of Sauce: Regular BBQ Sauce/Hickory Brown Sauce/ Smoky Sauce
BURGER
Cheese Burger $10
8oz. Patty with cut Cello Lettuce, Tomato, Pickles with Mushroom Sauce
Triple Cheese Burger $12
Monterey Jack Cheddar and Provolone
Sides:
One Side Dish of Choice: French Fries, Corn/Broccoli/Rice
COMBO MEAL
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Chamorro Sausage with Mushroom $10
Stir-Fried Tofu $8
Hot & Spicy Noodle Soup $10
Combo Set $12 Pizza ($11)
Steak/Flank $10
Cheese Burger $10
Chicken Tandoorie $10
Cordon Bleu $16
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Renovation of garment factory will complete $550K housing project

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With construction workers for Best Sunshine International, Ltd.'s casino project already occupying a renovated former garment factory barracks building in Tanapag, the company wants to renovate the fourth building of the defunct factory to house more workers.

Roger Pich, project manager for Castle Projects (CNMI) LLC, told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that they are planning to renovate Building B of the former Top Fashion Factory and barracks.

At Building B, Castle Projects will renovate the structure for a total of 32 units, including "supervisor units," with communal bathrooms.

Pich said Castle Projects first renovated Building D, then C, and just completed A last month.

Pich disclosed that Building D is already occupied by Chinese workers for the Best Sunshine casino project in Garapan.

He said he just got the job as project manager so he is not sure when the workers moved in and how many they are.

Castle Projects is applying for a conditional use permit with the Commonwealth Zoning Board for the existing dormitory renovation.

The Zoning Board, chaired by Diego C. Blanco, was set late afternoon yesterday to hold a public hearing on Castle Projects' request for conditional use application.

Last October, the Zoning Board approved the conditional use application of Castle Project to renovate the existing three warehouse structures formerly used by Top Fashion as a barracks for their employees.

With a site area of 15,000 square meters along Chalan Pale Arnold, Castle Project's renovation and restoration of the four buildings to create 136 housing units have an estimated budget of $550,000.

Attorney Michael Dotts, counsel for Castle Projects, told *Saipan Tribune* during the Zoning Board's hearing last October, that the dormitories would initially be used to house male construction workers, but the units will be later used to house hotel workers as the project "will move with the flow."

Dotts said the reality is that there is a shortage of housing on Saipan so the company's project will meet the housing shortage.

Youth Congress discusses Marianas reunification, string of bomb threats

HAGATNA, Guam—The 30th Guam Youth Congress convened for regular session last Jan. 23, 2016, to discuss the following:

Resolution No. 17-30, introduced by Reps. Santos, Arce, and Casila, is relative to opening the discussion of uniting the Chamorro people of Guam and the CNMI under one mutually respectful and understanding government.

The resolution aims to start discussions on a reunification plan of the two territories within the next two years in order to gage feasibility and sustainability issues.The Resolution passed in a 17-2 vote.

Resolution No. 18-30, introduced by Reps. Alcairo, Arce, Madlangbayan, Makepeace, Quinene, McDonald, Lin, Garcia, Adawag, Delorie, and Fejeran, is relative to expressing the position of the 30th Guam Youth Congress with great disappointment in regards to the numerous bomb threats experienced by various schools throughout Guam. The resolution also supports prosecuting those found accountable to the fullest extent of the law. After a brief recess, the resolution was amended to include the request of DOE Administrators in continuing to enact preventative measures in an attempt to deter further threats of terrorism. The resolution passed unanimously.

Rep. Javan Santos stated, "Guam and the Northern Marianas Islands may have had their historical distinctions but I'd like it to be time to open up the discussion and make time to find the best way to stand together, as one Chamorro people, because that's who we are. Unu hit."

Speaker Lawrence Alcairo further stated, "As we prepare for the Festival of the Pacific Arts, we welcome neighboring island cultures to our home, including our brothers and sisters in the CNMI, even though they come from the same people, share the same language, and profess the same cultural beliefs."

The members of the Guam Youth Congress also discussed Resolution No. 18-30 in response to the string of bomb threats occurring throughout the island. Speaker Alcairo stated, "These bomb threats are not to be taken lightly. They disrupt not only our school system, but also our public safety and everyday living. Those responsible must be held accountable." ***(PR)***

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Coast Guard searching for owner of adrift white dinghy near Kaneohe Bay

HONOLULU—The U.S. Coast Guard is seeking the public's help identifying the owner of a 13-foot white sailing dinghy found near Kaneohe Bay, Wednesday.

Anyone with information that may help identify the owner of the sailing dinghy is asked to contact the Coast Guard Sector Honolulu Command Center at 808-842-2600.

Watchstanders at the Sector Honolulu command center received a report at 5:25 p.m., from MCB Hawaii Waterfront Operations that a Marine Corps helicopter crew spotted an unmanned adrift paddleboard while conducting training near Kaneohe Bay.

Waterfront Operations launched a small boat crew to relocate the paddleboard. Once on-scene, the crew reported that it was not a paddleboard, but a small sailing dinghy with no mast, sail, or means of propulsion.

Attempts to contact the owner have been made, however the vessel is not currently registered.

There are currently no reported signs of distress or missing persons in the area.

The Coast Guard offers free "If Found" decals to be placed in a visible location on small, human-powered watercraft through the Operation Paddle Smart program. The information on the sticker can allow response entities to quickly identify the vessel's owner and aid search and rescue planners in determining the best course of action. Positive identification may also allow the item to be returned to the owner.

The stickers can be obtained for free at local harbormasters, through the Coast Guard Auxiliary, from Honolulu Sail and Power Squadron offices and at select marine retail and supply stores.

In addition to providing 24-hour security for base and a waterborne search and rescue capability, MCB Hawaii Waterfront Operations personnel also conduct mission and training support for the many Marine, Navy, and Coast Guard units in Hawaii. They also provide MCB Hawaii with a readily accessible Environmental Response Team in case of an oil spill in Kaneohe Bay. ***(USCG)***

Ninth Circuit dismisses 'ice' trafficker's appeal

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit has dismissed an appeal of a man who was slapped by the federal court with a 30-month prison term for distributing methamphetamine or "ice."

The Ninth Circuit judges said Bao Zhong Wang waived his right to appeal his conviction and sentence.

The Ninth Circuit judge said their independent review of the record, discloses no arguable issue as to the validity of the waiver.

"We accordingly dismiss the appeal," said three Circuit judges in their order.

Wang appealed, asking the Ninth Circuit to reverse his guilty-plea conviction and 30-month sentence.

Wang's counsel has filed a brief stating that there are no grounds for relief, along with a motion to withdraw as counsel of record.

Wang filed two pro se letters. The Ninth Circuit treated the letters as defendant's pro se supplemental brief.

The Ninth Circuit said to the extent that Wang seeks to raise a claim of ineffective assistance of counsel, they declined to address this issue on direct appeal.

In January 2015, U.S. District Court for the NMI Senior Judge Alex Munson imposed a 30-month prison term on Wang, who pleaded guilty to distribution of "ice."

According to the factual basis of the plea deal, on Nov. 27, 2012, Wang sold 4.7 grams of "ice" to a confidential source for the Drug Enforcement Administration in exchange for $1,350.

Attorney Steven Pixley served as court-appointed counsel for Wang. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

LTA to launch Allied Health Programs in February

The Latte Training Academy, Inc. in partnership with the Guam Marianas Training Center, is currently enrolling students for its Allied Health Programs. The courses, which are slated to begin on Feb. 1, 2016, include the Medical Billing & Coding Certification course, the Certified Nursing Assistant course, and the Certified Phlebotomy Technician course. As an approved provider with the CNMI's Workforce Investment Agency, participants may elect to enroll in the courses through the available WIA programs.

"Although the Latte Training Academy, Inc. has historically offered Hotel & Hospitality Certifications, our organization also began to look at the forthcoming demand for CNMI employment. Many of our Health Care professionals are non-U.S. workers, which presents a significant challenge for our community in the coming years. We looked at some relatively stable employment categories which the Latte Training Academy could provide certification courses in, and we arrived at the three courses that we will begin on Feb. 1 of this year. All of the courses offer U.S. certifications which are recognized throughout the United States for their respective fields," said LTA secretary Tina Palacios.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014 Occupational Outlook Handbook, occupations including medical billing and coding are expected to grow 15 percent over the next 10 years, with the national median pay at approximately $17.26 per hour. The same data show that certified nursing assistant job growth is projected to grow by 17 percent over the same period, with current median pay at $25,000 annually. The report points to a projected 25-percent increase in job growth for phlebotomist, who currently earn a median hourly wage of $14.74 an hour.

"There is a tremendous opportunity for this community to prepare itself for this unprecedented labor transition, primarily in the health care field. The CNMI's health care industry will be required to prepare itself with many of these professionals that we aim to certify. In the medical billing and coding profession alone, there has been a shift from an old ICD-9 system to the current ICD-10 system. Having professionals that understand the new system can significantly impact an organization's cash flow through accurate billing," says Fe Ovalles of the Guam Marianas Training Center.

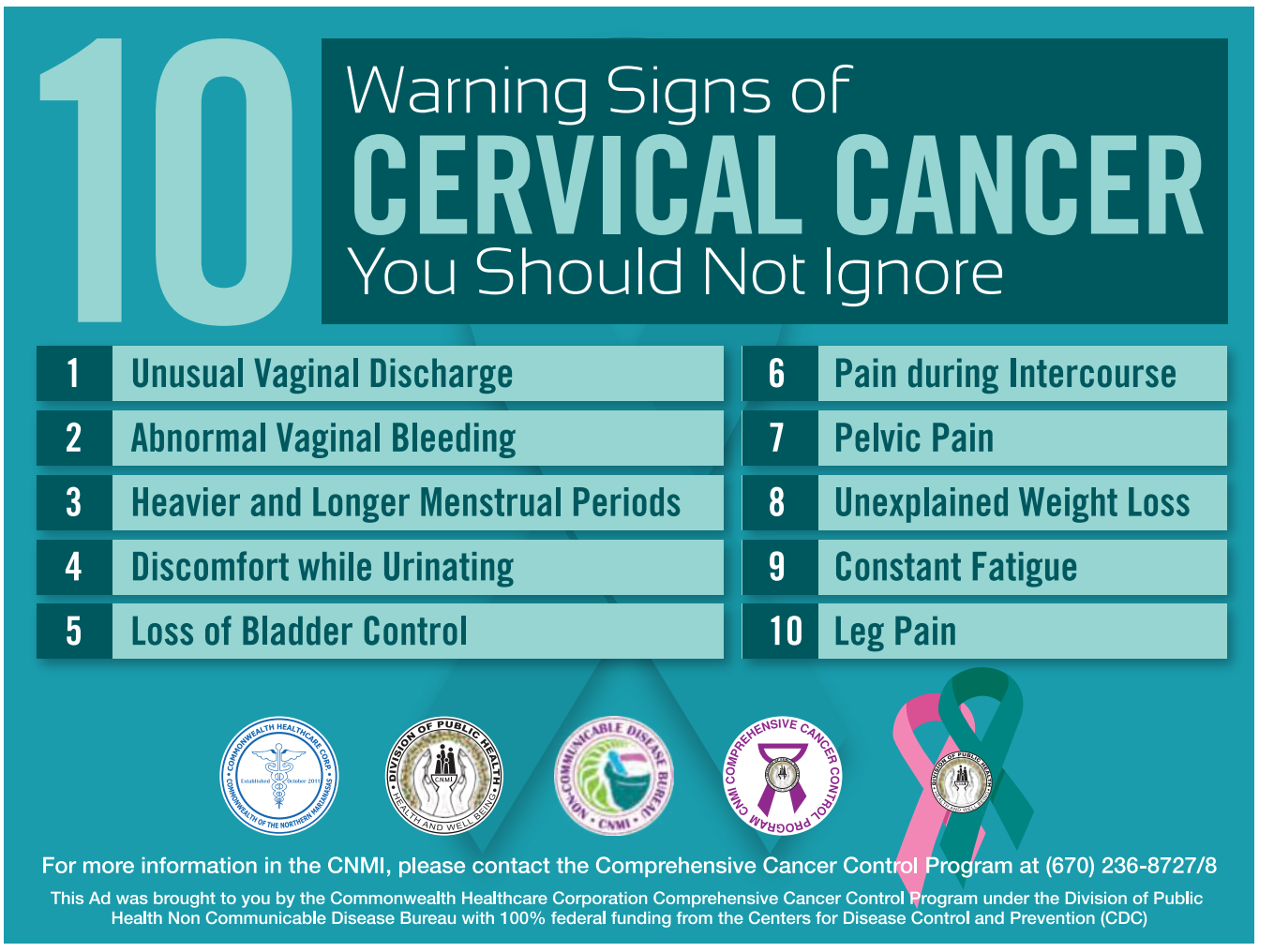
To learn more about and register for courses, please visit www.lattetrainingacademy.com or call 1-855-544-8500. ***(PR)***

Regular screening, healthy lifestyle keys in preventing cervical cancer

January is nationally recognized as Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. It is important for women to know what they can to do to lower their risk of having cervical cancer. Getting regular screening and practicing a healthy lifestyle changes greatly reduces a woman's chance of getting cervical cancer.

A Pap test (or Pap smear) looks for cancers and pre-cancers in the cervix (the lower part of the uterus that opens into the vagina). Pre-cancers are cell changes that might become cancer if they are not treated right away. Women between the ages of 21 and 29, should get a Pap test every 3 years, while women between the ages of 30 and 64 should get a combined Pap test and human papillomavirus (HPV) test every 3-5 years. Women with abnormal test results should follow the recommendations of their provider for treatment and follow up. Women 65 years and older may not need to have Pap Tests done if all their previous test have been normal. It is important for a woman to talk to her provider about getting a Pap test more often if she has a weakened immune system because of an organ transplant, chemotherapy, or steroid use; if she has had treatment for abnormal Pap results or cervical cancer in the past; or if she is HIV-positive.

Information on this page is provided by, www.womenshealth.gov, CNMI Cancer Registry Comprehensive Cancer Control Program and the Breast and Cervical Screening Program. ***(PR)***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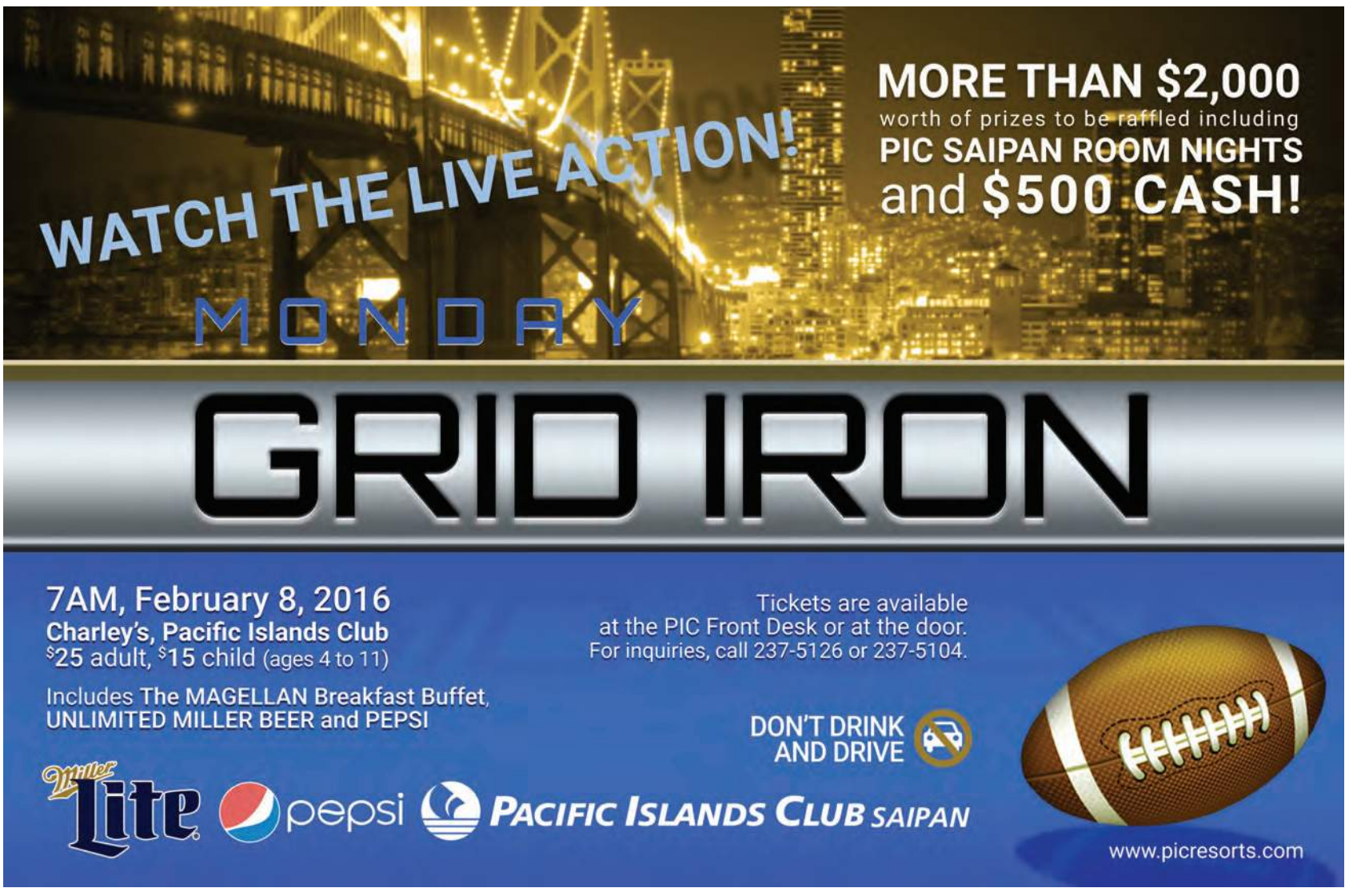

Opinion

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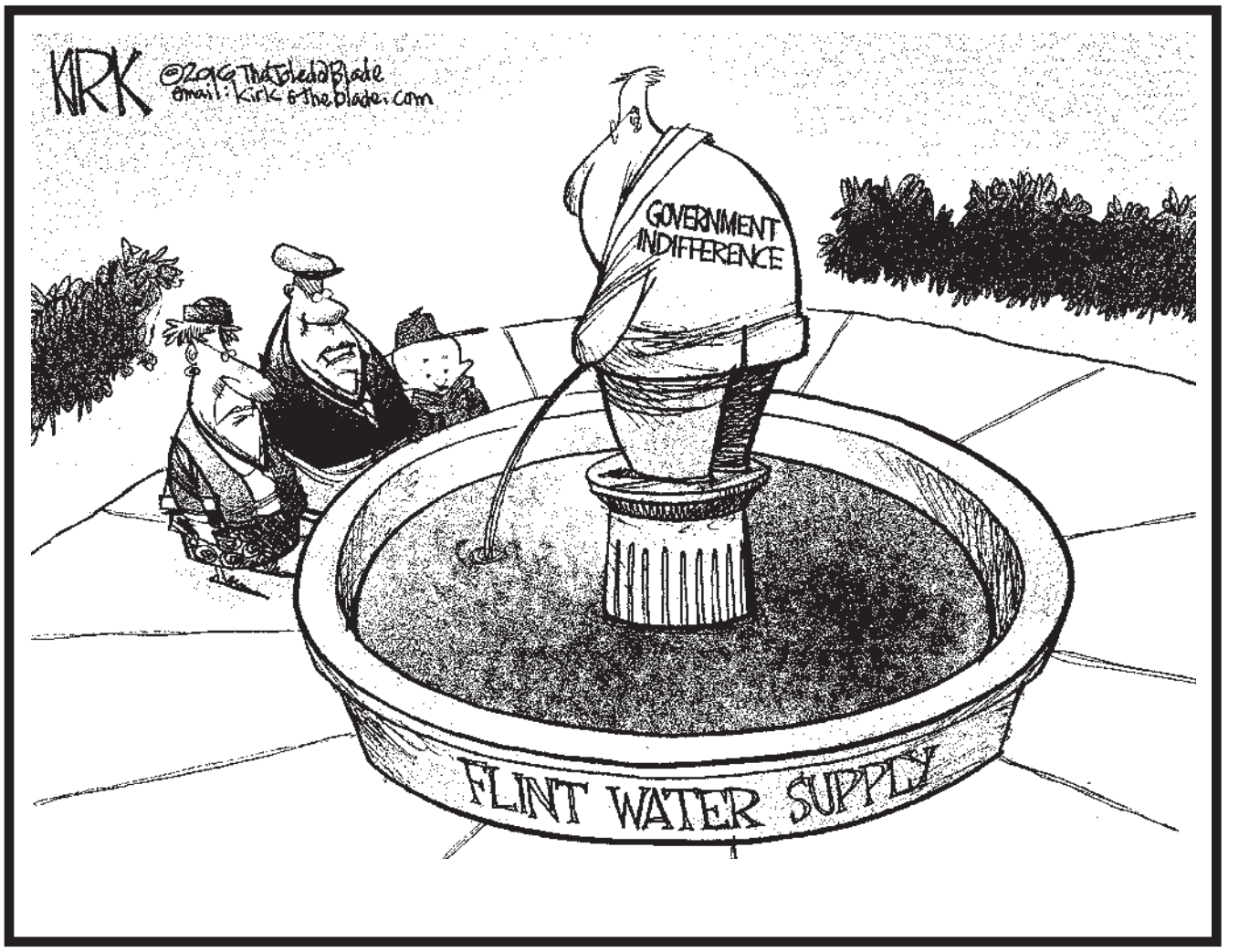

EDITORIAL

Fatal overdoses are reversing recent health gains

A national heroin and opiate epidemic has reversed health gains—especially among white Americans—that have resulted from medical advances. Drug overdoses are driving up death rates for young white adults to levels not seen for decades.

Findings from recent public health studies underscore the need for more intense prevention and treatment practices, as well as bolstered electronic databases that track the dispensing of opioids.

Young white people, ages 25 to 35, make up the first generation since the Vietnam era of the mid-1960s to experience higher death rates than the previous generation. Meanwhile, death rates for young African-Americans are falling.

In 2014, the overdose death rate for whites, ages 25 to 34, was five times the 1999 level, while the rate for 35-to-44-year-old whites tripled, according to a New York Times analysis.

Overdose deaths for young black adults have edged up, but only slightly. Overall, a decline in deaths from AIDS has contributed to a falling death rate for African-Americans. As a result, the former chasm between death rates for blacks and whites has shrunk by two-thirds.

Even among whites, death rates for those with less education rose much faster than for those with college degrees. Public health agencies must find more effective ways of targeting education and prevention efforts to lower-income people with less education.

Education programs, targeted at both patients and physicians, can cut the abuse of prescription painkillers that can lead to heroin use. For those already addicted, medication-assisted treatment has shown far higher recovery rates.

Addiction to heroin and prescription painkillers is reversing the strides many Americans have made in overall health. Without more intense treatment and prevention, the epidemic will only grow.

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Herman's Bakery

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara previously taught at SVES in the CNMI. A peripatetic pedagogue, he last taught in China but makes Honolulu, Shenyang, and Saipan home. He can be reached at pinoypanda2031@aol.com.

One of those inconspicuous places along Rte. 35 *aka* Airport Road in Saipan is the Herman's Modern Bakery with its Tita Marikita Café that offers local gourmet. Not frequently, but I go there to meet friends and colleagues. Their sweet bread will delight a tooth any day. The cost of their offerings beats the lagoon hotel restaurants and pantry hands down.

Late January, I had reason to mosey over. My intent to merge island touring with a language immersion program finally got to a flyer and a spiral bound that I can pass around to promote the addition to our visitors' menu so I sought first the one known simply as the "chairman," father of a former 6th grade student at SVES, at the 75-year old bakery, named before its namesake, a forebear of our acquaintance.

Now with a branch in Garapan that I have yet to patronize other than ask direction from the staff, the family bread maker and native food server broadened its breadbasket to serve a more cosmopolitan clientele. My colleague's generation (my age, mas o menos) handed over management and operation to the younger ones though our friend and his sister remains in the board, and the sister still has her finger in the daily management of the business.

We chose the bakery to title our reflection not because we want to tell folks more about their bread but that the establishment represents a local family concern deciding to take the needs of a local situation and proceeded to provide a local response to it.

OK. Local family is a numinous term. In Korea, between the Park and the Kim, you are halfway down the population. It would be the Wang and the Li in China, though it would be more widespread in Japan, but not by much. In the Marianas, the indigenous families might find cohesiveness among Babauta, Camacho, and Tenorio families and their extended relations, then add Ogumoro and Tabuted into the stew and one might cover a substantial network of relationships on the small island of Saipan.

Like the leading families in many societies around the world, the pure indigenes are not the ones who preside over power structures; creoles do, mestizos and mix bloods. My daughter once hurled a banner at her university urging the "Mongrels of the World" to unite. On her mother side, she inherited German, Welsh, Scot, and English pedigrees and on her father side, Indo-Malay, Austronesia, Fujian, Spanish, and Mexican lineage. I am sure there are other breakdowns on categories like "German," but never mind.

What makes one local these days is not chromosome pedigree but the resolve to take one's location seriously and make it one's home regardless of the constitution of one's DNA make-up

At the bakery, the subject of genealogy and ancestry became a topic of discussion when another colleague came in, works on noting local stories of elders about their ancestry and record them for posterity. The records of Chamorro-Carolinian ancestries were with the Spanish parishes when they kept them; the German administration briefly had a conscientious caretaker. The Japanese and Americans were meticulous in keeping records especially at the time when both forbade the local population from speaking their language in order to learn the tongue of the occupiers. It was not propitious to be indigene a century ago.

Our colleague at the bakery, like my daughter, is a pure blood "mongrel." He's done extensive work on genealogy and says that he is stymied after the fourth generation, which is important to the Chamorro and Carolinian communities with their penchant to acknowledge relations, even by marriage, to as distant as recognizable.

The phenomenon of "Main Street" described by Sinclair Lewis novel of the same title might have been the source of my teacher's dynamical sociology phenomenon labeled with the same name, where folks from Appalachia warring against each other for ages, find themselves in NYC and are suddenly kin. This applies to Filipinos who would not bother to get to know each other in their hometowns but are suddenly "related" in a foreign country.

Herman's Bakery and Tita Marikita Café are such a leveler of social relations, ignoring the social strata defined elsewhere, the drawing card being the croissant and the coffee, along with the servings of native and off-island dishes in an atmosphere that is not too ostentatious. In fact, it was subdued when I was last there, only occasionally raucous when there were too many young ones, but otherwise, convivial.

The issue of the indigene is where we started and this is up front in the legitimacy of ancient lands vs. public lands. A friend at judiciary says that judges harbor automatic sympathies on claimants of ancient lands if they can prove utility, otherwise, he advises that claimants apply for Torrens titles. Many new entities, with the connivance of local families, are incorporating and buying land in the name of the companies that have majority holdings from acquiescing indigenes.

Cozy over, taste the bread!

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Cancer, other serious illnesses

By JOHN DELROSARIO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.*

Rota Senator Terry Santos has sought the assistance of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for a water and soil testing on Rota. Her appeal is to see if there's anything in their content that may have triggered the increase of various types of cancer adversely affecting her people. Is the culprit in the soil or water, both or none of the above?

Local agencies can't simply dismiss the issue eyeballing it without scientific laboratory test to arrive at the truth. How do we know that island water hasn't been contaminated by potent and lethal pesticides accidently dropped by farmers?

That cancer has spiked among her people is sufficient a reason for healthcare officials at CHC to move commissioning a study to figure out the beast. It's an urgent health issue. CHC should facilitate help from the U.S. Department of Public Health and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This can't be sleepwalked! We should also ask Interior to assist in this effort.

Perhaps our Washington Delegate Kilili could help following up with EPA to intervene soonest. It's an urgent issue that needs confirmation or otherwise of contaminants in the water and soil on Rota. Should help the NMI and Rota especially when EPA steps in.

While at it, shouldn't we also ask for assistance to determine the origin of Type II diabetes, pancreatic malfunction, renal failure, and heart issues? Are heart issues here genetics or lifestyle or both? Studies to identify the causes of these long-term diseases should be given real time attention so we begin meaningful public education programs for the local populous. And we can focus on our young people first throughout the schools.

Senator Santos noted that the medical phenomenon relating to diabetes, kidney failure, cancer, and heart ailments are Marianas-wide in scope. It's more the reason that our healthcare management team begins the ball rolling to commission medical studies of these issues.

Since the mid-'70s I've been suspicious of various long-term illnesses here that have spiked since then. Slowly, they begin showing their ugly faces in, e.g., over 300 dialysis patients, number of patients being referred to off-island medical centers for heart and other serious ailments. Let's find out what they are and begin timely public education or preventive programs. Thanks Sen. Santos for alerting our community on this issue.

Silence of the Lambs: Money from a certain firm is flowing freely all over the island so designed to silence the lambs or indigenous people who may hold anti-sentiments against the casino industry.

It has turned into a fulltime undertaking given that the local government doesn't have the money to hire that many locals at this juncture. Private industry is also muddling along incapable of expanding its operations and payroll given the bad investment climate.

Recently, Speaker Raphael Demapan came out swinging saying we can't rely on casino alone and that he's asking colleagues to join him find other alternatives. It's a wild spout that is as empty and useless in its failed attempt. How about imposing a ten percent tax on soft count of casino revenue at day's end?

But there's a "bromance" between the casino bosses and majority of legislators to keep this sacred cow untouched. Perhaps this explains the agenda to ensure that incumbents retain their seats this coming November. Interesting! It's a contest against "we the people."

Healthcare Spending: Federal spending on healthcare programs has outpaced Social Security for the first time in 2015, according to an expansive report from the U.S. Congressional Budget Office (CBO). The feds spent $936 billion on the former versus $882 billion on the latter.

The programs include Medicare, Medicaid, and subsidies related to the Affordable Care Act under Obamacare. The last item would inflate federal deficit over the next decade by the billions of dollars under Obama's charge. Republicans have picked this issue as a likely presidential item for debate. It has also openly expressed that Obamacare is already under life support.

It's an issue we should tread as it develops in that subsequent decision to dismantle Obamacare altogether would adversely affect Medicaid here. When the source of the program is depleted or cut it means we carry the financial burden from A-Z. Be on the look out.

Donald's Success: Although Marco Rubio is my favorite among GOP presidential contenders for his articulate and heartfelt expressions as the son of a migrant, I had to admire the brawler (The Donald) for heading off the congested contest with clear approval from among GOP voters.

A lot of the intellectual conservatives had to retreat somewhere to figure out why people resonate so well with The Donald. Well, his expression accurately reflects the rage and anger of most average voters across the country. I like his raw speech that runs unfiltered from gut to his mouth and his comments are without craft.

Said Suzanne Fields, a nationally syndicated columnist who writes for the *Washington Times*, "The public isn't looking for an articulate, Kennedy-esque candidate who elegantly balances a phrase, a Ronald Reagan who soars metaphorically or even a somber intellectual who balances complex ideas like Richard Nixon. Voters want to hear unvarnished anger, rough and ready, rhetoric that comes with the bark still on and the gloves off." In agreement with her considered assessment.

Ooops! Basic infrastructure like water, powerm and sewer would be challenged when BSI's casino/hotel is hooked to the system. Traffic would be redirected as far down as Kristo Rai Church. Interesting how the new facility would deal the immediate community adequate share of water especially during the dry season. Planning, anybody?

Five plus one

By ED STEPHENS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Visit Ed Stephens Jr. at EdStephensJr.com. His column runs every Friday.

Would you like a free treat, something to salve the post-holiday credit card bill blues? I know I would. After my December spending spree I can't even afford to pay attention. Here is something I can heed, though: Our solar system is putting on a grand display right now. For the first time in over a decade, all five "visible" (easily seen with the naked eye) planets are showing themselves at the same time.

This has been a news item in a lot of papers. Overall, in our age of NASA, the Hubble telescope, and so on, astronomy news is a popular part of current events. Many such stories, however, are on the scientific side of things, and, though they often have cool photos taken with impressive instruments, they usually don't present readily viewable treats for the casual stargazer.

The five-planet event, by contrast, is perfect for casual stargazing. This certainly applies to anyone in Saipan who wants to take a look. This viewing window will be open for about three more weeks.

No telescopes or binoculars are needed. A cup of coffee might come in handy, though, since this is a just-before-dawn gig. A computer comes in handy too, since EarthSky.org features a "guide to the five visible planets." The guide's graphics can point anyone in the right direction so they know where to look.

But here's a quick-and-dirty: About an hour before sunrise, Mercury rises above the horizon near the point where the sun is about to rise. From Mercury, the other planets are strung across the sky in a line that extends to the west.

The sequence of the line is like this, moving from east to west: Mercury, Venus (which will be very bright), Saturn, Mars, Spica (a star), Jupiter (very bright, but not as bright as Venus). The moon can be in the mix as well along that general line, but its exact location depends on which day you catch it.

We can, meanwhile, enjoy the concept right now without having to get into the navigational details.

There are really six visible planets if we include Earth, so I guess we'll call this gig five-plus-one.

Since we're taking inventory here, we'll note that the two most distant planets, Uranus and Neptune, aren't on the stage for this. Uranus is said to be naked-eye visible under very good conditions, but that's not easily visible on the order of the five "visible" ones. And Pluto, which is even more distant than those two outliers, has been demoted from planet status since my school days.

Me, I'm an old-school kind of guy, and our solar system, including Earth, is, indeed, really old. We're talking about 4.5 billion years old. You and I are rooted in truly ancient stuff.

I consider myself fortunate to live in an era when we can have some perspective about the scale of this gig. This perspective started coming into focus only about 100 years ago.

It's tempting to think that Earth-bound stuff comes and goes, while all the stars endure as a constant backdrop, but things are more interesting than that.

In contrast to our solar system's long history, many of the bright stars we see are only a fraction of our sun's age. Many of those same stars will burn out long before our sun hits the skids. Indeed, the "live fast, die young" philosophy applies to cosmic stars every much as movie stars. The bigger and brighter a star is, the faster it burns out; some are mere cosmic eye-blinks.

The scale here is very wide. Our sun, for example, is about half way through a 10 billion year life span. By contrast, a really massive star might only live to be about 3 million years old, which means our sun will have a lifespan that's about 3,333 times longer than the massive star.

By contrast, there are some smaller stars that might live for 10 trillion years, so, taking this into account, the scale of star lifespans is so wide we can't really get our heads around it.

The small stars are, in fact, getting a lot of attention these days. By some accounts, most stars in our cosmic neighborhood are dwarf stars, of which there are several types.

One type that gets a lot of attention now is the "brown dwarf," which was a mere theoretical notion when I was in college. These were thought to be sort of junior stars that didn't make it into full-blown star status. More recently, though, they've been tallying more and more actual discoveries. Since these objects are so low-powered they are hard to detect, but instruments are getting better all the time. There may be as many as 100 billion brown dwarfs in our galaxy alone. And, yes, they have detected planets orbiting brown dwarfs, so things get even more interesting.

Faced with all this cosmic weirdness, our solar system seems like a cozy and snug home.

Cost of last Christmas? $1,839.77, plus interest. A cup of coffee in the pre-dawn hours? $1.50. Getting a five-plus-one view of our solar system? Priceless.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Man'amko news and hopes

My congratulations to all of the new *Man'amko* Council members upon their getting mandates from the *man'amko* congregation to lead us! We hope we have made right decision to trust you to manage our resources and improve *man'amko* life not only at the Aging Center but life of all the CNMI elderly.

It is so nice to see among the members our King Diego Pua, out nicely singing Jesus Pangelinan (they both got re-elected!), our active and respectful Manuel Sablan, and all the five beautiful council ladies. God bless you all on your upcoming hard work for us!

Also, we the elderly extend our warmest gratitude to our energetic director Walter Manglona for organizing a memorable *man'amko* trip to Guam so long expected. Our people enjoyed the beautiful sites of Guam. *Man'amko* is excited to visit Two Lovers Point, Micronesian Mall, etc. They all sang and danced a lot and still found time to play their beloved Bingo!

Naming the things of pleasures more, our *man'amko* visited so called "colleagues" from the Mangelao and Tamuning Aging Centers and discussed common "professional" matters and concerns. Our people were given reception by Mangeleo Mayor Mr. Blass. They met their relatives in Guam. They got charged highly and positively! It was our *man'amko's* second visit to Guam after the times when Joe Palacio had been Saipan Aging Center's director.

Now the *man'amko* are back and are feeling happier, stronger, and grateful for those days of enjoyment. Currently, they are anticipating the chance to ride all over our local nice places again, spend days in one of the best restoration places. We wish our staff keep up their work to satisfy our needs.

Life is going on. The *man'amko* are thankful to the Lord and are full of new initiatives and new projects. A new hope is in the air that our beautiful islands' new leadership lead by our honorable Governor Mr. Torres, the honorable senators, and honorable congressmen will find ways to address and support the CNMI elderly. We thank them for their efforts on behalf of the *man'amko*. Welcome from the *man'amko*! *Biba man'amko*!

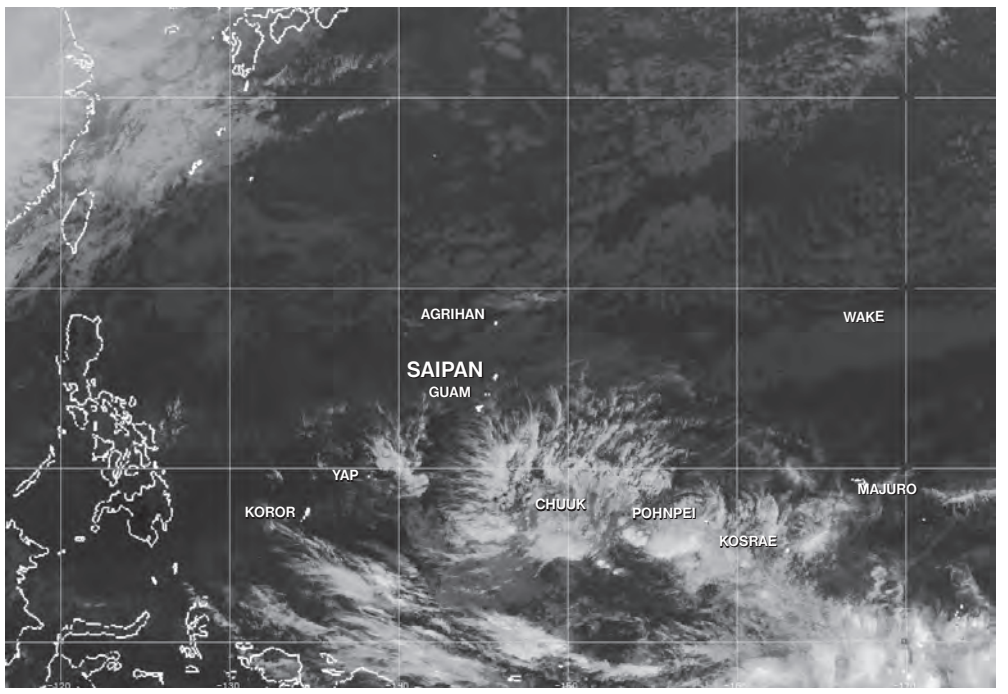
Teddy Guiao
Navy Hill

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers.
▲84º ▼73º	▲85º ▼73º	▲86º ▼74º	▲86º ▼74º	▲86º ▼75º

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 12:37 PM, THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2016
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front enters the discussion area near 20N180 and extends to just south of Wake Island near 17N167E then continues as a shear line through the Marianas near Saipan at 15N145E to beyond 130E at 11N. Cloudiness and patchy rain are found along and up to 300 miles northwest of this boundary. A near equatorial trough stretches from 2N140E to a circulation just south of Pohnpei near 5N158E and continues to the equator and 170E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms can be found between 4N and 8N from 142E to 160E and between the equator and 5N from 160E to 170E and 50 miles north and south of a line that extends from 3N137E to 1N148E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Showers	▲82	▼78
Palau	Partly Cloudy	▲87	▼77
Yap	Partly Cloudy	▲88	▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲85	▼80
Pohnpei	Cloudy	▲86	▼79
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	▲83	▼79
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	▲84	▼79

Around the Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲82	▼66
Beijing	Sunny	▲33	▼17
Hong Kong	Rain	▲66	▼57
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲81	▼69
London	Windy	▲54	▼46
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲76	▼50
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲91	▼73
Melbourne	Rain	▲71	▼55
Miami	Thunderstorms	▲80	▼59
New York	Mostly Sunny	▲44	▼33
Osaka	Rain	▲51	▼45
Paris	Mostly Sunny	▲51	▼45
Pusan	Rain	▲49	▼38
Rome	Partly Cloudy	▲63	▼46
Salem	Rain	▲54	▼43
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	▲61	▼54
Seoul	Cloudy	▲44	▼28
Tokyo	Rain	▲48	▼37
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	▲42	▼30

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides

Saipan Harbor

4:52 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.3 Feet
11:21 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
5:51 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.8 Feet
10:57 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.5 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:47 AM	6:13 PM
Saturday	6:47 AM	6:14 PM
Sunday	6:46 AM	6:14 PM
Monday	6:46 AM	6:15 PM
Tuesday	6:46 AM	6:15 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	10:29 PM	10:03 AM
Saturday	11:16 PM	10:41 AM
Sunday		11:20 AM
Monday	12:03 AM	12:00 PM
Tuesday	12:51 AM	12:42 PM

Note: Blank spaces indicate that a rising or a setting did not occur during that 24-hour interval.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 24, 2016

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA2924	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA2922	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA2921	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA2920	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA2928	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA2926	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA2921	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA2921	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ628	3:50am	7:40am	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:20am	Daily
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	5:30am	1, 3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)

MU7162	5:10am	08:00am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA2924/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA2924/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	1, 2, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2922/193	8:40am	11:10pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:30pm	5 via Rota-GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:50pm	1, 4, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA2920/183	2:20pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA2920/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA2920/193	2:20pm	11:10pm	2 via GUM-ROR
UA2926/191	9:50pm	7:20am+1	1, 6 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ628/721	3:50am	12:50am	Daily via ICN
UA2922/159	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2921/159	1:30pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via Rota-GUM
UA2920/159	2:20pm	10:35pm	3, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA2923	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA2925	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA2921	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA2920	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA2927	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA2929	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA2920	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA2920	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:35am	3:10pm	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
OZ627	9:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily
7C3404	10:10pm	3:30am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6, 7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN

MU7161	10:00 pm	5:30am	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA190/2929	9:55am	9:20pm	2, 6, 7 via GUM
UA190/2929	10:00am	9:20pm	3 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ702/627	12:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA2925	10:05pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA192/2920	10:20pm	1:50pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	11:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2920	11:59pm	1:50pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	11:59pm	5:35pm+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2929	11:59pm	9:20pm+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/627	2:20pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
UA116/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA116/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA116/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

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TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
6:30AM	6:45AM	Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

Zika virus monitoring continues in Pacific

NOUMEA, New Caledonia—The Pacific Community, in collaboration with the World Health Organisation, has this week sent an update on the Zika virus infection to public health ministries and health professionals in the Pacific Islands region.

SPC closely monitors the Zika situation regionally and internationally, along with other diseases, such as dengue and chikungunya.

"We provide an ongoing service to the region's public health professionals whereby we maintain a map of epidemic and emerging disease alerts for regional health security purposes," the acting Deputy Director of SPC's Public Health Division, Dr Salanieta Saketa, said.

"According to the information available to us, no Pacific countries have reported confirmed cases of the Zika virus infection so far this year, but further investigation is under way to ascertain circulation of the virus in a number of Pacific Island countries and territories."

Zika virus infection can only be confirmed by a laboratory diagnosis, and the Pacific Islands overall have very limited capacity for Zika testing.

"We're working closely with our partners from the Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network to overcome this challenge and facilitate access of all countries to the few laboratories who can perform the testing," Dr Saketa said.

Part of SPC's update concerned the latest findings on the possible association between Zika virus infection in pregnancy and congenital central nervous system malformations, including microcephaly.

While this is not proof that Zika virus has caused these malformations, a possible association cannot be ruled out given the evidence available.

"In view of the latest findings, we provided countries with a number of recommendations. For example, we recommend all travellers, particularly pregnant women, who are visiting known affected areas to take extra precautionary measures to prevent being bitten by mosquitoes," Dr Saketa said.

The map of epidemic and emerging disease alerts in the Pacific is updated in real-time and is available at: www.spc.int/phd/epidemics

Further information on Zika virus infection can be obtained from:

■ WHO website
http://www.wpro.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs_05182015_zika/en/

http://www.who.int/features/qa/zika/en/

http://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_topics&view=article&id=427&Itemid=41484&lang=en

■ CDC website
http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html

■ ECDC website
http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/zika_virus_infection/Pages/index.aspx. ***(PR)***

Tonga govt officials attend accountability workshop

The Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions, in coordination with the Tonga Parliament and the Tonga Audit Office, started the new year in Tonga with a three-day, high-level workshop for parliamentarians of Tonga on the role of a Public Accounts Committee of Parliament.

The workshop was facilitated by PASAI advocate Eroni Vatuloka and Siosiua Utoikamanu (and former Tonga minister of Finance), with Chita Marzan and Savenaca Narube from the Pacific Financial and Technical Assistance Centre. The workshop was attended by Cabinet ministers, People's Representatives and Nobles Representatives.

Lord Tu'ivakano, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Tonga noted, "the major role we play in ensuring that financial scrutiny is carried out. We, as Members of Parliament, can do this by ensuring that public funds are used wisely, with the intention of improving the lives of the Tongan people."

Key government officials came together to talk about the role of Members of Parliament in overseeing how public funds are spent and the role of the Public Accounts Committee within the Tongan Parliamentary processes. It was acknowledged that the Public Accounts Committee is challenged by limited time to review budgets, estimates and reports and there is a need for better coordination and planning.

Vatuloka said, "The Office of the Auditor-General is one of a number of anti-corruption agencies that has found it hard to get its recommendations implemented. The intention of the workshop is to build a working relationship with the Parliament Committees.

"Given delays in processing financial audits in the Pacific region, this relationship will support the government officials responsible for preparing government accounts and for scrutinising those accounts after they are audited."

PASAI is able to bring a regional perspective to their workshops, sharing Pacific-wide experiences and circumstances. This is the second workshop that PASAI has run under its new advocacy program and they hope to run more across the Pacific. Key discussions are likely to include the level of participation of the private sector in the scrutiny of government budgets, whether the Public Accounts Committee should engage civil society and non-government organisations, and whether the independence of Parliament has an impact on the independence of the Audit Office.

The workshop was run with funding support from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). PASAI is the official association of supreme audit institutions (government audit offices and similar organisations, known as SAIs) in the Pacific region. PASAI promotes transparent, accountable, effective, and efficient use of public sector resources in the Pacific. It contributes to that goal by helping its member SAIs improve the quality of public sector auditing in the Pacific to uniformly high standards. PASAI is supported by the Asian Development Bank, the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, the International Association of Supreme Audit Institutions Development Initiative, and the World Bank. ***(PR)***

Navy Recruiting Station Guam to hold ribbon-cutting ceremony

ASAN, Guam—The Navy Recruiting Station Guam will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony Feb. 1 at 11am at the Guam Capital Investment Corp. (GCIC) building military recruiting annex in Hagåtña.

The Navy recruiting station closed in October 2015 for renovations and recently reopened its doors. Prior to the renovation, the enlisted and officer candidate offices were located separately. Now those interested in learning more about the various Navy career programs can do so at a one-stop shop.

During the ceremony, Rear Adm. Bette Bolivar, Commander, Joint Region Marianas, and Cmdr. Michael Lee, with Navy Recruiting District Los Angeles, will deliver remarks.

For more information, contact the Joint Region Marianas Public Affairs Office at (671) 349-4055/3209. ***(PR)***

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Tanapag Middle School plants rain garden

The Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality teamed up with Micronesia Islands Natural Alliance, Northern Marianas College ENRO Club, and students from Tanapag Middle School's Micronesia Challenge Club to plant a rain garden on campus.

A rain garden is planted in a depression or a dip and works to collect rainwater draining of roads and walkways. As rainwater flows downhill, the rain garden catches pollutants and sediment that might otherwise end up in our oceans. Storm water that flows through the middle school campus (home of the Tataga!) ends up in the Tanapag Lagoon. Storm water can include sediment and harmful pollutants such as animal waste, motor oil, pesticides and fertilizers, can affect fish and corals that live in the lagoon. Tanapag's new rain garden will help slow down and clean the polluted storm water. The soil helps filter the polluted water and the plants help keep the soil in place as well as using the storm water to grow. This is BECQ's third rain garden on island. The other rain gardens can be found at San Vicente Elementary School and at the CNMI Museum.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
A rain garden has been planted at the Tanapag Elementary School by the joined forces of Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality, Micronesia Islands Natural Alliance, Northern Marianas College ENRO Club, and students from Tanapag Middle School's Micronesia Challenge Club.

Students from Tanapag Middle School and NMC's ENRO club also participated in filming a climate change informational video that will be available for distribution at the end of this year. While we cannot stop climate change, we can work to make our island healthier and more resilient, which means our environment will be better able to adapt to changes in the future.

Anyone can help our oceans by building a rain garden on their property. For more information on how to plan and plant your very own rain garden please call BECQ at 664-8500. ***(PR)***

12 private schools join coalition

The Commonwealth Coalition of Private Schools is proud to announce that it has concluded its membership drive. The following schools are official members of CCOPS:

- Agape Christian School
- Brilliant Star School
- Grace Christian Academy
- Green Meadows School
- Marianas Baptist Academy
- Mount Carmel School
- Northern Marianas International School
- Saipan Community School
- Saipan International School
- Whispering Palms School
- Grace Christian Academy (Tinian)
- Eskuelan San Francisco De Borja (Rota)

All member schools are required to submit a copy of their curriculum, an anonymous list of faculty members and teaching assignments, a calendar with 180 days of instruction, and a current business license. The listed schools have met the requirements for membership. If you would like more information about joining CCOPS, please contact the coalition president Galvin Deleon Guerrero at Mount Carmel School, or the Compliance Committee chair, Tim Bray, at Saipan International School. ***(PR)***

Type II Handcrew Packtest

February 2, 2016 at 0900 hours
Tinian Fire Station

The Department of Fire & Emergency Medical Services [DFEMS] Forestry Strike Team is looking for individuals for our Type II Handcrew. Applicants must be disciplined, reliable, physically fit, and are able to work hard under tough conditions.

TEST: Applicants must complete a 3 mile walk (no running) with a 45 lbs pack under a 45 minute time period.

REQUIREMENTS: Valid U.S. Passport, IS 700 and certifications for returning individuals.

Contact Person: Firefighter Linus L. Mizutani Jr.
Email: llmizutani@dfems.gov.mp | Tel.: 285-7324

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
Tel. (670) 234-6866/234-9447 / 234-7670 • Fax: 234-9021
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp

Notice to the General Public

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program
(December 31, 2015)

Pursuant to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently published FY 2016 Fair Market Rent (FMR), which took effect on December 11, 2015, the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) wants to respectfully inform the general public that there has been a decrease in the FY 2016 FMR. As a result of this decrease, NMHC's FY 2016 Payment Standards shall be effective for all **FY 2016 New Admission and Other Change-of-Unit (Unit Transfer) certifications** that occur after December 11, 2015. Based on 24 CFR 982.505, for participants undergoing an annual recertification, the FY 2016 Payment Standards shall take effect for the family beginning at the effective date of the family's second regular reexamination following the effective date of the decrease in the payment standard amount.

Thank you and please direct all questions regarding this public notice to the following individuals:

1. **Saipan Office – Telephone Numbers: 234-6866 or 234-9447**
   - David Chargualaf, PHD Manager – email: phdmanager@nmhcgov.net
2. **Tinian Field Office – Telephone Number: 433-9213**
   - Frances Diaz, Tinian Field Office Representative – email: tiniannmhc@nmhcgov.net
3. **Rota Field Office – Telephone Number: 532-9410**
   - Arvin Ogo, Rota Field Office Representative – email: ropnmhc@nmhcgov.net

PGFC coach of GCA applauds participants

Grace Christian Academy's Primary Grades Forensic Conference coach and GCA first grade teacher Rosanna Lopez said it's been a wonderful opportunity to coach her pupils in first grade and to serve as a judge for PGFC.

"As a coach, it is my desire to see my students perform at their best and have fun. I enjoy it when students accept the challenge to participate in an event that is new to them, like from a group category to an individual event. We try to practice at school so they will be comfortable delivering the material on their own. I am just amazed with their excitement and hard work. I have seen positive changes among them, from being shy to becoming confident and independent. Of course, the support and help of our dear partners, the parents and guardians, is invaluable. I am looking forward to seeing more students participate in PGFC and developing their skills in public speaking in the future," she said.

All of the nine first graders who joined PGFC this school year are all qualified to join the regional competition next month at GCA along with other students from Kinder 5 to 5th grades.

GCA is proud of all their PGFC participants and says thank to all the teachers, judges, and student volunteers for all their help. Below is the list of all the GCA PGFC winners from Kinder 5 to 5th grade who competed last Jan. 16, 2016, at Oleai Elementary School.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Grace Christian Academy's Primary Grades Forensic Conference winners from Kinder 5 to 5th grade who competed last Jan. 16, 2016, at Oleai Elementary School pose for a group photo.

K-2 DIVISION
K5
Dramatic interpretation
Eliane Nerisse Pagaduan, 4th Place

Humorous Interpretation
Devin Wang, 3rd Place

Impromptu Speaking A
Aiyana Fatialofa, 2nd Place
Devin Wang, 3rd Place
Eliane Nerisse Pagaduan, 4th Place
Ioane Jude Camacho, 5th Place

1ST GRADE
Dramatic interpretation
Marisa Wang, 5th Place

Duo Interpretation
Min Su Andy Kim, 4th Place
Arielle Mae Matutino, 4th Place

Impromptu Speaking A
Maria Sofia Gomez, 1st Place

2ND GRADE
Humorous Interpretation
Earl Jean Pantaleon, 1st Place

Impromptu Speaking B
Azriel Fatialofa, 1st Place
Rafael Busby, 2nd Place
Yellena Sarang Kim, 3rd Place

Readers Forum Masters B
Azriel Fatialofa, 1st Place
Yellena Sarang Kim, 2nd Place

3-5 DIVISION
3RD GRADE
Dramatic interpretation
Moira Grace Ernest, 1st Place
Jennifer Woo, 2nd Place

Humorous Interpretation A
Tae Hee Kim, 4th Place

Readers Forum Masters B
Eunice Nicole Pagaduan, 1st Place
Tae Hee Kim, 2nd Place
Julianna Rue Magtalas, 3rd Place

Impromptu Speaking A
Eunice Nicole Pagaduan, 2nd Place
Tae Young Lee, 5th Place

4TH GRADE
Impromptu Speaking A
Julia Jinang, 2nd Place

Readers Forum Masters B
Juruel Neilan Magtalas, 5th Place

Readers Forum Masters D
Julia Jinang, 4th Place
Sara Elizabeth Keaton, 5th Place

5TH GRADE
Dramatic Interpretation A
Steven Adriatico, 3rd Place

Impromptu Speaking B
Jacob Anthony Camacho DLG, 1st Place

Duo Interpretation A
Soleil Lamar, 1st Place
Hye Jin Elliot, 1st Place

Readers Forum Masters C
Steven Adriatico, 1st Place
Jacob Anthony Camacho DLG, 4th Place
Matthew Gabriel Ernest, 5th Place

GCA Teacher/Coach
K5 Teacher, Mrs. Sheryl Joy Prieto
1st Grade Teacher, Mrs. Rosanna Lopez
2nd Grade Teacher, Mrs. Miriam Dilse
3rd Grade Teacher, Miss Maria Gerecke
4th Grade Teacher, Miss Tammy Dammer
5th Grade Teacher, Miss Grace Duran

K-2 Coach, Mrs. Leah Garfil
PGFC Coach/Coordinator, Mrs. Esther Manzano

Judges/Volunteers: Marilyn Aldan, Rosanna Lopez, Leah Dalusung, Leah Garfil, Bethany Garfil, Christy Lee, Charissa Parco, Jewel Cubangbang. ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

SEALED BIDS for construction of a Brown Tree Snake (BTS) Containment Barrier at the Tinian International Airport, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Project No. CPA-TA-002-13 will be received at the office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP, 96950.

All Bids shall be sealed in an envelope and marked on the cover package outside as follows: Tinian International Airport Brown Tree Snake Containment Barrier Construction, Project No. CPA-TA-002-13 and must be submitted no later than **2:00 PM on FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2016** to the Office of the Executive Director at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, at which time and place the sealed Bids will be publicly opened and read.

The Project, in general, consists of, but is not limited to, construction of a 40' x 40' concrete containment barrier, inclusive of masonry work, touch up painting, electrical connection to existing panel, lighting and power, bituminous pavement, all in accordance with the Project Drawings and Specifications.

The Project is being financed by funds from the Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA). The Contract award, if it is made, will be made within sixty (60) calendar days of the receipt of Bid Proposals. CPA reserves the right to hold such Bids in effect for ninety (90) calendar days from the date of Bid opening.

The Contract period for construction of the Project in its entirety shall be one hundred twenty (120) calendar days. Liquidated damages in the amount of one hundred fifty dollars ($150.00) shall be assessed the Contractor for each calendar day completion of the Project is delayed beyond the Contract completion date without approved excuse.

The apparent low Bidder may be subject to a thorough and comprehensive review of its qualifications and Bid Documents to ensure that they are "responsive and responsible." The review will include, but is not necessarily limited to, previous projects experience, financial capability, quantity and quality of equipment and personnel, and ability to secure bonding and insurance. If the apparent low Bidder is found to be not "responsive and responsible", their Bid will be rejected and the next lowest Bidder will be evaluated for qualifications.

All mechanics and laborers on the Project shall be paid no less than the minimum wage rate established by CNMI Law or the U.S. Secretary of Labor, whichever is higher. The Contractor shall take into account minimum wage increases that may be imposed in the CNMI over the life of the Contract. A copy of the CNMI Minimum Wage Rate Determination is included in the General Provisions, Section 70-25.

The EEO requirements, labor provisions, and wage rates are included in the Specifications. Bid Proposal documents are available for inspection at the Commonwealth Ports Authority office at no cost.

Each Bidder must complete, sign, and furnish the "Bidder's Statement on Previous Contracts Subject to EEO Clause", a "Certification of Non-Segregated Facilities", and the "Assurance of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises Participation", as contained in the Bid Proposal documents, with submission of their Bid Proposal.

A CD-Rom containing the Bid Proposal and Contract Documents, including Drawings and Specifications, may be obtained at the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, upon payment of **ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS ($100.00)** for each set of documents in electronic form, including the Bid Schedule. The payment is nonrefundable. Payment shall be made in cash, cashier's check or U.S. Postal money order made payable to the "Commonwealth Ports Authority".

A Pre-Bid Conference will be held at the Tinian International Airport, at **10:00 AM, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2016** to explain and clarify any questions regarding this Project. Attendance of the Pre-Bid Conference is mandatory. Questions should be submitted to the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, in writing, at least seven (7) days prior to the Pre-Bid Conference date.

Bid Proposals shall be submitted on the Bid Proposal form included in the CD-Rom obtained from the Commonwealth Ports Authority. The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all Bids submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Notice to Bidders; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding Bid rejection or cancellation; (c) any calculation error made in the Bid Schedule or mis-entry of the quantity of line items; or (d) sufficient justification exists that awarding the Project Contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said Bids if, in its sole opinion, to do so would be in CPA's best interest.

The proposed Contract is under and subject to Executive Order 11246, as amended by Executive Order 11375, dated October 13, 1977, and Section 60-1.4(b) of the Regulations of the Secretary of Labor (41 CFR 60-1) as implemented by Section 152.61 of the Federal Aviation Regulations, and to the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Federal Labor provisions.

Each Bidder must supply all information required by the Bid documents and Specifications.

A Contractor having 50 or more employees and any subcontractor having 50 or more employees and who may be awarded a contract of Fifty Thousand Dollars ($50,000.00) or more, will be required to maintain an affirmative action program, the standards for which are contained in the Specifications. To be eligible for award, each Bidder must comply with the affirmative action requirements.

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, minority business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit Bids in response to this Invitation and will not be discriminated against, on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, in consideration for an award of any Contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement.

Women will be afforded equal opportunity in all areas of employment. However, the employment of women shall not diminish the standards or requirements for employment of minorities.

Each Bid shall be accompanied by either a Bid Bond issued by a U.S. Treasury listed surety company, Certified Check, or a Cashier's Check in an amount not less than ten percent (10%) of the Bid amount. Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

The proposed Contract is under and subject to the foreign trade restrictions required by 49 CFR Part 30, Denial of Public Works Contracts to Supplier of Goods and Services of Countries that Deny Procurement Market Access to U.S. Contractors.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY:

/S/ JOSE R. LIFOIFOI
Board Chairman/Contracting Officer

Date: January 22, 2016

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Following Information/Documents Required
Property Map/As Built Map/ Total Land Area
If available for existing building showing
exact location & building details
Owner Title Information
Owner Asking Price

MINA working to conserve Saipan's watersheds

The Micronesia Islands Nature Alliance's Schools for Environmental Conservation project kick-started the year with a watershed workshop last Jan. 16, 2016. This year's theme is "Learning About, Interacting With, and Actively Conserving Saipan's Watersheds." Students from Saipan Southern High School, Kagman High School, Marianas High School, Mount Carmel School, Northern Marianas Academy, and Tanapag Middle School spent the day learning about Saipan's watersheds, their functions, benefits, importance and the impacts humans can have on them.

MINA

Group photo of the students, teachers, presenters, and Micronesia Islands Nature Alliance staff.

Other presentations were on climate change, watershed conservation and developing a conservation action plan (CAP).

These presentations were conducted by employees of the Bureau of Environmental Quality: Jihan Buniaq, Coral Reef Education and Outreach coordinator; Becky Skeele, Coastal Resources planner; Dr. Ryan Okano, Water Quality Management/Non-Point Source Pollution Program manager; Avra Heller, Coral Reef Project coordinator; and Carey Demapan, Micronesia Challenge young champion.

Healthy watersheds are important because they protect our groundwater, keep our land from flooding, and help keep our ocean clean and healthy. This project provides opportunities for students and teachers to work and focus on an environmental issue. Each school is required to produce a CAP through which they create a project addressing their watershed. The program is funded by the Department of Interior and runs throughout the school year ending with the school teams presenting their final CAP presentations showing their project, what strategies were used and their results.

To learn more about MINA's Schools for Environmental Conservation program, visit MINA's Facebook page, email MINA at minaoutreach@gmail.com, or call us at 233-7333(REEF). ***(MINA)***

Military to conduct training at FDM, W-517

ASAN, Guam—The Air Force will conduct training at the island of Farallon de Medinilla during the following dates and times:

■ Feb. 1 and 3 from noon to 5:30pm

■ Feb. 4 from 10am to noon

■ Feb. 5 from 10am to 5:30pm

The Navy will conduct training at Warning Area 517 Feb. 2-3 from noon to 10pm.

The general public, especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators, are advised to stay clear of the areas during the dates and times indicated.

The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla will be on a 12-nautical mile radius on all quadrants. Farallon de Medinilla plays a special and unique role in national defense because its location provides frequent access that supports established training requirements. In addition, the air and sea space in the Farallon provides sufficient room for the many different attack profiles necessary to replicate training opportunities in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

W-517 is an irregular shaped polygon comprising of 14,000 nautical square miles of airspace that begins south of Guam and extends south-southwest in international waters. W-517 supports surface and aerial gunnery, missiles, and laser exercises. This will affect fishing in the vicinity of Santa Rosa Reef and Galvez Bank.

For more information, contact the Joint Region Marianas Public Affairs Office at (671) 349-4055/3209. ***(PR)***

Mt. Carmel hails PGFC winners

Mount Carmel School congratulates her Knights for doing well at the Jan. 16 Primary Grades Forensic Conference meet held at Oleai Elementary School, with special thanks for their teacher coaches Marilyn Divino, Shirley Duenas, Zita Sablan, and Ariadne Snodgrass.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mount Carmel School winners of the Primary Grades Forensic Conference meet held last Jan. 16 at the Oleai Elementary School pose for a group photo with their teacher coaches at the Mount Carmel campus

GRADES K-1

READERS FORUM MASTERS

Oscar Bien Buenaflor – 1st Place
Jessiana Tenorio – 2nd Place
Valerie Ann Estella – 2nd Place
Peige Tomokane – 3rd Place
Mikaehla Paige Mendoza – 4th Place
Lance Javier – 4th Place

Heleyna Dela Santa – 5th Place

IMPROMPTU

Mikaehla Mendoza -1st Place
Heleyna Dela Santa – 3rd Place
Emmanuel Pontiveros – 4th Place
Oscar Buenaflor – 4th Place
Lance Javier – 5th Place
Valerie Ann Estella – 5th Place

GRADES 3-5

READERS FORUM MASTERS

Jalen Nicholas – 1st Place
Elisha Lacap – 3rd Place

DUO INTERPRETATION

Nhicole Valiente and Angelou Buensalido - 2nd Place

IMPROMPTU

Brissa Hunter – 2nd Place
Kyla Monique Cabrera – 3rd Place
Jenarisa Dayrit – 4th Place
Angelou Buensalido – 5th Place

HUMOROUS INTERPRETATION

Kina Dela Cruz – 2nd Place

TO: ANA FRANCES I. GATBONTON AND IVANN I. GATBONTON:

You are in default in your Promissory Note dated September 20, 2005, secured by a Real Estate Mortgage of the same date, executed and delivered by you to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation.

(a) Description of the real property covered by Mortgage:

Lot no. 011 G 262, situated in Kagman III, Phase II, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 799 square meters, more or less, as shown on the Division and Lands and Surveys Official Cadastral Plat no. 011 G 06 dated December 1, 1993, Commonwealth Recorder's File no. 93-4414, the description therein being incorporated herein by reference.

(b) Date and amount of Promissory Note and Mortgage: September 20, 2015; $50,000.00
(c) Amount due for principal: $3,127.72 as of December 1, 2015
(d) Amount due for interest: $10,062.60 as of December 1, 2015
(e) Daily accruing interest: $7.67
(f) Late Charger $904.55 as of December 1, 2015

If the principal, interest, and late charges $14,094.87, plus accruing interest, together with reasonable attorney's fees in the amount of $500.00, are not paid within thirty (30) days from the date of service of this notice upon you, you will be in default, and Court proceedings will be commenced against you to foreclose upon the said Mortgage because of the default.

Unless you, within thirty (30) days after receipt of this letter dispute the validity claim, or any portion thereof, we will assume that it is valid. If you notify us in writing within this thirty (30) day period that the claim, or any portion thereof, is disputed, we will obtain information on the debt and mail you a copy thereof. Upon your written request within this thirty (30)-day period, we will provide you with the name and address of the original creditor, if different from the creditor indicated above.

This letter is an attempt to collect a debt. Any information obtained will be used for that purpose.

PARA: ANA FRANCES I. GATBONTON yan IVANN I. GATBONTON

Ti un komple i kontratahan debimu (Promissory Note) ni un fitma gi Septembre 20, 2005, ni afabobot i Real Estate Mortgage ma asegurao i tano yan guma ni un empena gi mismo dia, un fitma yan un entrega i empena (Mortgage) guato gi Northern Marianas Housing Corporation.

(a) I deskripsion tano ni ma empenen (mortgaged):

Sito numiro 011 G 946, ni gaigi gi Kagman III, Saipan, Note Marianas, ni ha konsiste un aria 799 kuadrao Metro, mas pat menus, ni anok gi Division Tano yan Mididan Tano afisiat Cadastral Plat numiro 011 G 06 Gi Disiembre 1, 1993, guihi I diskripsion ni ma incorporate guini ginen i informasion

(b) I kantida yan I fechan este na debi yan empepena: September 20, 2005; $50,000.00
(c) Kantida undebi para principat: $3,127.72 asta ki Disiembre 1, 2015
(d) Kantida undebi para interes: $10,062.60 asta ki Disiembre 1, 2015
(e) Interes kada dia: $7.67
(f) Appas pot atrasao (late charges): $904.55 asta ki Disiembre 1, 2015

Yangin ti un apasi I kantida na principat, interes, yan apas pot atrasao (late charges) $14,094.87 yan i resenable na apas abugado pot $500.00 gi halom trenta (30) dias despues di i fecha ni un resibe este na notisia, un ma konsidera komo ti unkomple I propriadat tano'mu ni un empepeña guato gi Northern Marianas Housing Corporation.

Solo yangin halom trenta (30) dias dispues de un resibe este na kata yan un kontraminagahet-ña pot I apudera sino komo i pattida, siempre bai in hongge an asientadu a apudera. Pago tangin un kattayi han gi halom este i trenta (30) dias siklo man infofotma hao pot i apudera sino komo i pattida para un kontra, pues bai in henta infotmasion pot I dibi-mus dispues un ma kattayi i kopia pot este na de'unta. Anai in resive I kata-mu gi halon trenta (30) dias siklo, bai in nai'I hao i nai'I hao i na'an yan address I akredot komo ti parehu na akredot ma indika guini hulu.

Este na kata para u ma na'kesiña ma rikohi i dibi-mu. Maseha haga na infotmasion ni in resibe pot este na apudera – siña bai in usa para bai in ke-chagi mu rekohi para este I dibi-mu.

/s/
MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ.
Attorney at Law

WELLESLEY
W
of the
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Calling All Alumnae
Please contact Janet King
Janet.King@kingattorney.com
(670) 233-1209

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPY • CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB16-DLNR/DFW-045

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: FEBRUARY 17, 2016 • TIME: 10:30 A.M.

"FISH AGGREGATING DEVICE (FAD) TRANSPORTATION AND DEPLOYMENT FOR DLNR – DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE COMMONWEALTH RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS AND PROPOSALS; IN WHOLE OR IN PART, AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTION IN A BID IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS. ALL BIDS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ RICHARD B. SEMAN
SECRETARY OF DLNR

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY • CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP-DCCA/CCDF-039

SUBMISSION DATE: FEBRUARY 22, 2016 • TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"TO IMPLEMENT THE PILOT AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH ON THE CNMI CCDF QUALITY RATING & IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM (QRIS), A PROJECT UNDER THE DCCA – CHILD CARE DEVELOPMENT FUND PROGRAM

THE SCOPE OF WORK WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

A PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD AT THE CHILD CARE DEVELOPMENT FUND OFFICE BUILDING NO. 1347 ASCENSION COURT IN CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN AT 1:30 P.M., LOCAL TIME, ON FEBRUARY 05, 2016. ANY QUESTIONS, SHALL BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO MS. MARIBEL S.D. LOSTE, PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR VIA EMAIL AT ccdf.maribelloste@gmail.com OR BY FAX TO (670) 664-8547 NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS, FEBRUARY 10, 2016. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH OTHER PROSPECTIVE PROPOSER(S).
THE GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSALS AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTION IN A PROPOSAL IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ LAURA T. OGUMORO
SECRETARY OF DCCA

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPY • CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB16-DLNR/DFW-043

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: FEBRUARY 17, 2016 • TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF A NEW TRAILER FOR THE DFW 27' BOSTON WHALER CHALLENGER VESSEL FOR DLNR – DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE COMMONWEALTH RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS AND PROPOSALS; IN WHOLE OR IN PART, AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTION IN A BID IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS. ALL BIDS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ RICHARD B. SEMAN
SECRETARY OF DLNR

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

LOST PASSPORT

TIAN, CUI

PASSPORT#: G25436001

DATE OF ISSUE: 29 SEPTEMBER 2007

EXPIRATION DATE: 28 SEPTEMBER 2017

IF FOUND, PLEASE CONTACT:
670-989-9982

LAW OFFICES OF S. JOSHUA BERGER
D'TORRES BUILDING. GARAPAN
P.O. Box 504340
SAIPAN, MP 96950
Phone (670) 235-8060 Fax 235-8070

Attorney for Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

BANK OF SAIPAN, Plaintiff, v. RUDOLF W. LEIS and HELGA G.G. LEIS, Defendants.	)	CIVIL ACTION NO.: 15-0199 **SUMMONS (for Publication)**

TO : HELGA G.G. LEIS

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file with the Superior Court any Answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which shall be provided upon request to Plaintiff's counsel, within twenty-one (21) days after the fourth publication, and to deliver or mail a copy of your Answer to the Law Offices of S. Joshua Berger, Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is Second Floor, D'Torres Building, Garapan, P. O. Box 504340, Saipan, MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your Answer.

Your Answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

By Order of the above Court:

Dated: December 24, 2015.

/s/ Clerk of Court

First Publication

CNMI set to celebrate Catholic Schools Week

Last Monday Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Victor B. Hocog signed a proclamation declaring next week as Catholic Schools Week in the CNMI. With that proclamation, the CNMI's three Catholic schools, Mount Carmel School on Saipan, Sister Remedios Early Childhood Development Center on Saipan, and Eskuelan San Francisco de Borja on Rota, will join the rest of the nation in celebrating Catholic Schools Week 2016.

In their proclamation, Torres and Hocog recognized the excellent education that the CNMI's Catholic schools provide to their students. As they wrote, "Sister Remedios Early Childhood Development Center, Mount Carmel School, and Eskeulan San Francisco de Borja have provided outstanding education to their students, thus contributing to the welfare of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands." Torres and Hocog added, these schools "are committed to providing a safe, structured and caring learning environment dedicated to developing each student's God-given potential."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, left, and Lt. Gov. Victor B. Hocog, center, sign a proclamation declaring Jan. 31-Feb. 6, 2016 as Catholic Schools Week. Torres' chief of staff and 2007 Mount Carmel School AlumKnight, Matthew Deleon Guerrero, right, and Mount Carmel School Student Council president and CNMI Youth Congress speaker, Thomas Manglona, rear, look on.

This year's CSW theme speaks to the holistic framework of Catholic education by proclaiming, "Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge, and Service". As the National Catholic Educational Association announced, "The theme encompasses several concepts that are at the heart of a Catholic education. First, schools are communities— small families in their own right, but also members of the larger community of home, church, city and nation. Faith, knowledge and service are three measures by which any Catholic school can and should be judged."

For its part, Mount Carmel School has prepared a full week of events that are aligned with CSW themes for each day of the week. On Sunday at 9am., the focus will be on "Catholic Schools in our Parishes" as MCS students converge on Mount Carmel Cathedral to kick off CSW 2014 with a Eucharistic Celebration. On Monday, the focus shifts to "Catholic Schools in our Community" as MCS junior high and high school students engage in different activities that support community services. Elementary school students will make banners expressing their appreciation for the school's many donors and supporters. Tuesday will be dedicated to "Catholic Schools in our Faculty and Staff." On that day, MCS will hold an appreciation program for faculty and staff, in which the 2016 Teacher of the Year will be announced. On Wednesday, MCS will celebrate "Catholic Schools in our Vocations" with a Eucharistic Celebration, which will be followed by a vocations talk and other activities honoring vocations. MCS will shift its attention on Thursday to the rest of the country with "Catholic Schools in our Nation" as students honor the many ways that volunteer groups have contributed. Friday morning's emphasis will be on "Catholic Schools in our Students" with MCS students participating in a road-side waving in the morning, followed by field activities and demonstrations. Friday night will highlight "Catholic Schools in our Families" with the school's signature CSW event, Family Night. Held on the school grounds beginning at 6pm, Family Night will feature dinner, entertainment, and the presentation of a new award, Parents of the Year.

The school's celebration of Catholic Schools Week will conclude with the "Night with the Knights" AlumKnight fundraising banquet on Saturday. The "Night with the Knights" will feature a music video montage of the school's history, raffle prizes, and entertainment. The event will also include the announcement of the 2016 AlumKnight of the Year. Formerly known as the Distinguished Graduate Award, nominations for the prestigious award have been expanded to include AlumKnights who spent at least four consecutive years at the school.

The celebration of Catholic Schools Week began as an annual event in 1974. Catholic Schools Week and the National Marketing Campaign are joint projects of the National Catholic Educational Association, the world's largest private professional education association, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the national public policy organization of U.S. bishops. ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

Main Office: Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport
P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950-1055
Tel.: (670) 236-6500/1 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-mail: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

For the Supply, Delivery, Installation, & Commissioning of two (2)Runway PAPI Lights (Precision Approach Path Indicator) &two (2) REIL Lights (Runway End Identifier Lights) for the Benjamin T. Manglona Rota International Airport, Rota Project No. CPA ROTA-RFP-009-16

The Commonwealth Ports Authority is soliciting sealed proposals from qualified electrical and engineering firms, company, and/or corporations to supply, deliver, install and commission two (2) PAPI Lights & two (2) REIL Lights at the Benjamin T. Manglona, Rota International Airport

The proposal package will be available beginning January 15, 2016, at the Office of the Executive Director, 2nd Floor, Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport.

A mandatory pre-proposal conference will be held at the Office of the Rota Ports Manager, Benjamin T. Manglona International Airport, at 0900 AM, January 29, 2016, to explain and clarify any questions regarding this project. A subsequent site visit will be conducted in order to assess the area and determine equipment and materials needed for the installation.

All proposals are to be submitted in a sealed envelope marked with the respective RFP description to the office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, 2nd floor of the Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, no later than 2:00 p.m., February 05, 2016.

Each proposal shall be accompanied by a bid bond issued by a CPA approved surety company, a certified check, or a cashier's check in the amount no less than ten percent (10%) of the total proposal amount. Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

Questions regarding this Request for Proposals may be submitted to the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, at the Saipan International Airport, via facsimile (fax) to (670) 234-5962 or emailed to cpa.receptionist@pticom.com no later than January 29, 2016. Response to inquiries shall be by addendum and provided to all proposers who have picked up the proposal package.

CPA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Request for Proposals; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding the project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said proposals if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest.

All proposals shall become property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

MARYANN Q. LIZAMA
Executive Director

Date: 01/05/16

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION TO BID
CUC-ITB-16-004

SURVEYED VEHICLES & EQUIPMENT

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is inviting interested individuals and firms to bid on CUC Surveyed Vehicles & Equipment located in Saipan & Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Bid Package may be obtained at no charge upon registration at the CUC, Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Dandan, Saipan, between 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays.

One (1) original and One (1) copy must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "**CUC-ITB-16-004, CUC Surveyed Vehicles & Equipment**" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 26, 2016,** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

Bidders must sign a Waiver of Liability, removing CUC's liability from claims resulting from violations relating to the removal and disposal of the surveyed vehicles & equipment. CUC shall transfer and assign the surveyed vehicles/equipment to the prospective bidder in an **"As is, Where is"** condition. By accepting the transfer and assignment, the bidder acknowledges that CUC has made no representation or warranties of the merchantability, quality, fitness, and condition of the vehicles/equipment.

The vehicles/equipment may be inspected by appointment only, between the hours of 9:00 AM thru 3:00 PM Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, by contacting CUC Procurement & Supply Division at telephone no. 664-4282 extensions 367 & 305. For the vehicles on Tinian, please contact Winston Omar at 433-9261 or 433-3488.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any defects in the said bids, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in the best interest of the CUC.

All inquiries must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 19, 2016, to Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC Purchasing Officer, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, CUC Administrative Technician for Procurement via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Acting Executive Director

Business

Private business hopes for bigger role in Vietnam economy

BAT TRANG, Vietnam (AP)—After a decade of uneven progress, foreign and local businesses hope the reshuffled leadership of Vietnam's ruling Communist Party will double down on modernizing an economy dominated by state companies.

Once a much-hyped rising star among developing Asian nations, foreign perceptions of Vietnam have swung between fears it was on the verge of a financial collapse to seeing it as a rival to China as the world's factory floor.

Problems such as episodes of high inflation, festering bad debts at state banks and riots in 2014 against Chinese-owned factories have underlined the risks of doing business. At the same time, Vietnam's young workforce, high if volatile growth rates and low wages have attracted a steady stream of long-term foreign investment involving companies from Intel to Samsung. New free trade agreements have also sent a positive signal to investors.

A five-yearly party congress this week rearranged the deck of top leaders. Among the changes, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, who has pushed economic liberalization, was unsuccessful in maneuvering to become party general-secretary, which is defacto the No. 1 leadership position, and will leave the inner circle. The old guard incumbent, Nguyen Phu Trong, was re-elected as general-secretary. Despite the apparent strengthening of a conservative faction, Vietnam is not expected to undo closer ties with the United States and incremental adoption of free market economic policies.

Tran Minh Thang, who employs 50 workers making cheap porcelain pots, cups and dishes in historic Bat Trang outside Hanoi, said that most of all he wants the government to provide stability because "we cannot do anything if there's no stability." Beyond that, he hopes the new leadership will "speed up economic reforms." Because, he said, "once the country develops, my business will also benefit."

Standing in the way of development is Vietnam's biggest unresolved economic challenge. Much of the economy remains dominated by inefficient state-owned companies even after a series of market-style reforms that began in the 1980s. Like neighboring China, Vietnam's authoritarian leaders are reluctant to relinquish control over commerce, fearing that doing so could ultimately imperil their political stranglehold.

AP

In this Jan. 22, 2016 photo, workers coat potteries with enamel in a factory in Bat Trang village, Hanoi, Vietnam.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS (DPL)
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS (CNMI) GOVERNMENT

RFP16-RED001

"QUARRY OPERATOR ON PUBLIC LANDS"
Submission Deadline: March 04, 2016

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Victor B. Hocog, through the Department of Public Lands (DPL), are soliciting sealed proposal from quarry operators to conduct operations for commercial purposes on the following public lands in As Matuis, Saipan:

Lot 069 A 01, containing an area of approximately 20,000 square meters, more or less, as is.

The RFP instruction and information package can be picked up at the Department of Public Lands, located on the 2nd floor of the Joeten DanDan Commercial Building, Saipan, during working hours of 7:30am to 4:30pm, Monday through Friday, except holidays. Questions regarding the RFP must be received **no later than 4:30pm on February 05, 2016** and must be submitted in writing to Mr. Pedro A. Tenorio, Secretary of DPL at the following address:

Department of Public Lands
P.O. Box 500380
Saipan MP 96950
2nd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Commercial Building
Telephone number (s): (670) 234-3751/52/53
Facsimile number: (670) 234-3755
Email: pete.tenorio@dpl.gov.mp

Sealed proposal must be marked **"RFP16-RED001" Quarry Operator.** One (1) original and five (5) copies of sealed proposals must be submitted to the DPL at its address above **no later than 4:00pm ChSt, March 4, 2016.**

Interviews may be conducted with the top two (2) ranked firms to discuss the proposal submitted if DPL deems the two proposals to be similarly advantageous to DPL.

DPL reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive any imperfections in any proposal if in its opinion would be in the best interests of the public land beneficiaries. All proposals shall become the sole property of the Department of Public Lands.

PEDRO A. TENORIO, Secretary
Department of Public Lands

Senate subcommittee examines migrant children abuse

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Federal officials don't know how many migrant children they've sent to live with convicted criminals across the U.S. over the last three years, at a time the government sought to speed young Central American migrants out of shelters and into private homes, the chair of a bipartisan congressional subcommittee said Wednesday.

Overwhelmed by the numbers of children crossing the border, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services weakened its child protection policies, leaving children vulnerable to human trafficking, Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio, said in an opening statement to the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.

The subcommittee is holding a hearing Thursday to examine weaknesses in the agency's placement program for migrant children, which Portman says suffers from "serious, systemic defects."

The senator's statement echoes the findings of an Associated Press investigation released Monday, which found that more than two dozen unaccompanied children were sent to homes across the country where they were sexually assaulted, starved or forced to work for little or no pay. In his statement, Portman said that as part of its six-month investigation, the subcommittee reviewed "more than 30 cases involving serious indications of trafficking and abuse." Since almost all of the children have not been publicly identified, it could not immediately be determined if the children studied by the AP were among those cited by Portman.

"The program does an amazing job overall," HHS spokesman Mark Weber said in a recent AP interview. "We are not taking shortcuts."

Top HHS officials are scheduled to testify at the hearing, which will reveal new details in a case in Portman's home state of Ohio, where six Guatemalan unaccompanied minors were placed with human traffickers including sponsors and their associates. Lured north with the promise of an education, the teens instead were forced to work up to 12 hours a day on egg farms in Marion, Ohio, under threats of death.

Facebook to expand beyond its 'like' button 'pretty soon'

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—It won't be long before Facebook's 1.6 billion users have more ways to quickly express their feelings on the world's largest social network.

After four months of testing outside the U.S., Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg says that "pretty soon" six new emotions will be added to the social network throughout the world.

Zuckerberg didn't give a more concrete timetable while discussing the new feature with analysts in a conference call Wednesday following Facebook's latest quarterly earnings report.

The additional options will expand Facebook beyond the renowned thumbs-up symbol that people click on to show they like a comment, photo or video posted on the social network.

The new reactions will include symbols for "angry," ''sad," ''wow," ''haha," ''yay" and "love."

"We want people to be able to share all of the things that are meaningful to them, not just the things that are happy and that people are going to like when they see it," Zuckerberg said Wednesday.

Facebook is hoping the additional choices will encourage people to share their thoughts more frequently and hang out on the social network for even longer periods than they already do.

Facebook has been testing the different reactions in Chile, the Philippines, Portugal, Ireland, Spain, Japan and Colombia.

Zuckerberg said Facebook's engineers still need to make a few more "tweaks" before the new options are offered in other parts of the world.

Nation

Ammon Bundy urges last refuge occupiers to go home

BURNS, Ore. (AP)—A day after eight members of an armed anti-government group were arrested, their jailed leader on Wednesday urged a handful of remaining militants to abandon the Oregon wildlife refuge they have occupied for more than three weeks and where they are now surrounded by federal agents.

After militant leader Ammon Bundy made his first court appearance in Portland on Wednesday, his attorney, Mike Arnold, read this statement from his client: "Please stand down. Go home and hug your families. This fight is now in the courts."

It was unclear whether the remnant of Bundy's followers still holed up at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge south of Burns was ready to heed his advice.

Meanwhile, details began to emerge about the confrontation Tuesday on a remote highway that resulted in the arrest of Bundy and other leading figures in the group of occupiers, and in the death of militant Robert Finicum.

Bundy followers gave conflicting accounts of how Finicum died. One said Finicum charged at FBI agents, who then shot him. A member of the Bundy family said Finicum did nothing to provoke the agents.

An Oregon man who says he witnessed the shootout says he heard about a half-dozen shots but didn't see anyone get hit, and that the shooting happened quickly - over maybe 12 or 15 seconds. Raymond Doherty told KOIN-TV (http://is.gd/AgNSdm) that he was about 100 feet back and couldn't see who specifically was shooting. But, he added, "I saw them shooting at each other."

There was no immediate way to confirm the accounts. Authorities refused to release any details about the encounter or even to verify that it was Finicum who was killed.

Also on Wednesday, a federal judge in Portland unsealed a criminal complaint that said the armed group had explosives and night-vision goggles and that they were prepared to fight at the refuge or in the nearby town of Burns.

Someone told authorities about the equipment on Jan. 2, when the group took over Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, according to the document.

Study finds automatic braking cuts rear-end crash risk

DETROIT (AP)—Vehicles equipped with automatic braking or front-collision warning are less likely to cause a rear-end crash, according to a study released Thursday by the insurance indu33stry.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety says automatic braking—which can bring the car to a stop if it senses an imminent collision—can reduce rear-end crashes by 40 percent. Front collision warning—which warns the driver but doesn't brake—cuts the risk of a rear-end crash by 23 percent.

The institute measured the systems' effectiveness by looking at police records for 7,490 rear-end crashes in 27 states. All of the crashes happened between 2010 and 2014. They only considered crashes caused by Acura, Honda, Subaru, Mercedes and Volvo vehicles that offered optional automatic braking or forward-collision warning. Then they compared the performance of the vehicles that were equipped with the optional systems and those that weren't.

The institute said that if all vehicles were equipped with systems that worked as well as the ones studied, there would have been 700,000 fewer rear-end crashes in 2013 alone.

"As this technology becomes more widespread, we can expect to see noticeably fewer rear-end crashes," said David Zuby, the institute's chief research officer.

Forty percent of vehicles sold in the U.S. currently offer automatic braking, while 61 percent offer forward-collision warning, the institute says. They can be expensive options, however. Subaru offers it on the Impreza sedan, for example, but it's part of a $2,895 safety package.

But the technology will soon be more widely available. Last fall, 10 automakers agreed to make automatic braking a standard feature on all of their cars. A deadline hasn't yet been set for that to happen, but it will likely be in the next few years.

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STEM Teacher (Computer / Digital Arts & Mathematics)	Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree in computer science or related field.	February 24, 2016
STEM Teacher (High School Science & Advanced Placement Science Courses)	Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree in science or related field.	
Vice-Principal for Curriculum & Instruction	Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree in education or related field.	

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Asia

US, China spar over N. Korea, South China Sea

BEIJING (AP)—Top U.S. and Chinese officials sparred Wednesday over how to deal with North Korea's latest nuclear weapons test and ease tensions over territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met for more than four hours and said their discussions were "constructive" and "candid." But at a joint news conference, they presented sharply opposing positions on the two issues.

Kerry acknowledged that "our differences will continue to test us." Still, he stressed that the world benefits when the United States and China are able to work together, including on the Iran nuclear deal and climate change.

On North Korea, Kerry said the United States wanted new U.N. Security Council action that would impose "significant new measures" to punish Pyongyang for its test this month and boost pressure on the North to return to disarmament talks.

AP

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, center, is seen through a loop of a rope used as a security line for the media as he and U.S. Ambassador to China Max Baucus, left, meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, Wednesday, Jan. 27, 2016.

"There's been a lot of talk about North Korea through these past years. Now we believe is the time for action that can bring North Korea back to the table," Kerry said.

Wang said China, which is North Korea's most important ally, chief trading partner and a key source of economic assistance, agreed on the need for a new resolution. But he suggested that Beijing would not support new penalties even though it has condemned the testing. "Sanctions are not an end in themselves," he said.

"The new resolution should not provoke new tension in the situation, still less destabilize the Korean Peninsula," Wang said.

Taiwan president visits island in disputed South China Sea

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Taiwan's president, defying criticism from key ally the United States, visited to an island holding in the disputed South China Sea on Thursday and called for peaceful development in the increasingly tense region.

Accompanied by about 30 staff members, Ma Ying-jeou (MAH YEENG JOH) left the capital Taipei early in the morning aboard an air force C-130 cargo plane bound for Taiping Island, also known as Itu Aba.

Taiping lies in the Spratly island group, an area where Taiwan shares overlapping claims with China, Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines. The city state of Brunei also claims a part of the South China Sea.

Taiping is the largest naturally occurring island in the area, but has recently been eclipsed in size by man-made islands created by China out of reefs and shoals. China has built housing, ports, airstrips and other infrastructure on the newly created islands, drawing accusations from the U.S. and others that it is exacerbating tensions in the strategically vital region.

Taiwan stations about 200 coast guard personnel, scientists and medical workers on Taiping. It occupies a number of other islets in the South China Sea, including the Pratas island group to the north.

After arriving, Ma spoke at a national monument on the islet and reiterated his call made last year for peaceful use of the sea. He also cited developments on the islet, including a 10-bed hospital and a lighthouse, saying they reinforced Taiwan's claim of sovereignty and granted it rights over the surrounding waters.

There was no immediate response from Beijing, but the Philippines, which occupies a string of islands and reefs near the island Ma will visit, expressed its concern over the trip.

PH growth short of target at 5.8 percent in 2015

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine economy grew 5.8 percent in 2015, short of even lowered government expectations after being hampered by a weak world economy, El Nino and slow government spending in the first half of the year.

The government initially forecast growth of 7-8 percent for 2015 but later lowered its projection to 6-6.5 percent.

"Though this is lower than what we targeted for the year, this growth is respectable given the difficult external environment," Economic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said Thursday.

The Philippines has been one of the fastest growing economies in Asia for several years. Despite increased government efforts to raise living standards, the country of more than 100 million still faces considerable challenges including its vulnerability to typhoons and other natural disasters, poverty, corruption and poor infrastructure.

The economy expanded 6.3 percent in the last quarter of the year, the fastest for 2015. It was up from 6.1 percent the previous quarter but down from 6.6 percent in the same period of 2014.

Balisacan said growth has averaged 6.2 percent in the past six years, which is the best performance since the late 1970s. The growth has not been due to unsustainable borrowings like in the 1970s and short-lived portfolio capital but fueled by investments that create jobs and increase incomes, he said.

He said last year's growth was driven by much stronger domestic demand and government spending that grew 9.4 percent compared to the previous year's 1.7 percent. Growth in public and private investments more than doubled, primarily led by public construction.

Service industries were also robust, growing 6.7 percent in 2015 from 5.9 percent in 2014. Industry expanded 6.0 percent while agriculture grew a tepid 0.2 percent.

World

France asks EU partners for new sanctions on Iran

PARIS (AP)—France has asked its European Union partners to consider new sanctions on Iran for its recent missile tests, officials have told The Associated Press, even as Paris welcomed the president of the Islamic Republic, which is flush with funds from the lifting of other sanctions over Tehran's nuclear program.

The ambiguous signals emerging Wednesday from France came as President Hassan Rouhani, a relative moderate elected in 2013, signed billions of dollars in business deals on an earlier stop in Italy and met with Pope Francis in the first such Iranian foray into Europe since 1999.

France hopes for similarly lucrative deals during Rouhani's two-day visit, along with regional peacemaking efforts as the once-pariah state emerges from decades of isolation.

But amid the courting of Iran, two officials from EU nations told AP that the request for new sanctions came shortly after the EU and the U.S. lifted sanctions on Tehran on Jan. 16 in exchange for U.N. certification that Iran had scaled back its nuclear programs. Iran said those programs were peaceful but critics feared it wanted to build nuclear weapons.

The two officials said the French request came after the United States had imposed new sanctions on Iran over the firing of a medium-range ballistic missile.

The two officials said the French proposal is formally under EU review, but most other EU members view it as counterproductive to efforts to revive political and economic ties with Iran after the long chill over the nuclear dispute. The officials, who were briefed on the issue, spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the issue publicly.

The French government did not respond to AP requests for comment by late Wednesday. In an email to AP, the European Union also did not address whether France had asked for a review.

A French diplomat who spoke only on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk publicly on the topic cited Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius as saying the EU is reviewing the possibility of new sanctions on Iran. He declined to say which nation initiated the process.

Putin aide: Syrian vote must include refugees

MOSCOW (AP)—Syrian refugees should be given an opportunity to cast their ballots in the country's future elections, Russia's security chief has told The Associated Press, adding that the international community should focus on creating conditions for a free vote in Syria.

However, demands for the immediate departure of Syrian President Bashar Assad would be counterproductive, said Nikolai Patrushev, a longtime associate of President Vladimir Putin who serves as the executive secretary of the presidential Security Council.

"Let's remember the sad experience of Iraq and Libya," Patrushev told the AP in a written reply to questions Tuesday—his first remarks ever to a foreign news organization. "Have they succeeded in stabilizing the situation there following a foreign intervention and physical removal of those countries' leaders?"

Russia has recently joined forces with the United States and a dozen other nations to help broker Syrian peace talks set to start in Geneva on Friday, which are intended to pave the way for a new constitution and new elections in a year and a half.

The nearly five-year Syrian conflict began in 2011 with protests against Assad's rule and has morphed into an all-out civil war, involving a myriad of opposition units. It has seen the Islamic State group carve out a sizeable chunk of the country's territory and killed a quarter of a million people and displaced millions. Moscow has staunchly backed Assad throughout the war, shielding his government from U.N. sanctions and providing it with weapons.

Patrushev reaffirmed Russia's longtime stance that it's up to the Syrian people to determine Assad's fate and the country's future.

"What Syria should look like and who should be at its helm tomorrow must be determined by the Syrian people, not Russia or any other country," Patrushev said.

Moscow has denied media reports claiming that Russia's top military intelligence officer recently visited Damascus to urge Assad to step down.

Scientists: More research needed into Zika-microcephaly link

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)—The release of new figures apparently finding fewer cases of microcephaly in Brazil than first feared is adding force to calls for more research into the link between the rare birth defect and the spreading Zika virus.

Health experts have been looking at 4,180 suspected cases of microcephaly reported since October in Brazil, where authorities said the birth defect could be linked to the virus and announced that 220,000 military personnel were being deployed to help eradicate the Aedes aegypti mosquito that transmits Zika.

But on Wednesday, Health Ministry officials said they had done a more intense analysis of more than 700 of those cases, confirming 270 cases and ruling out 462 others.

What this means is hard to say, according to some experts. It does not answer whether the tropical Zika virus is causing the babies to have unusually small heads. Nor does it really tell us how big the problem is.

"I don't think we should lower our alarm over the Zika outbreak," said Paul Roepe, co-director of Georgetown University's Center for Infectious Disease.

Brazilian officials still say they believe there's a sharp increase in cases of microcephaly and strongly suspect the Zika virus is to blame. The concern is strong enough that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention this month warned pregnant women to reconsider visits to areas where Zika is present, and officials in El Salvador, Colombia and Brazil have suggested women stop getting pregnant until the crisis has passed.

But the World Health Organization and others have stressed that any link between Zika and the defect remains circumstantial and is not yet proven scientifically. And the new figures were a reminder of just how little is known about the disease and its effects.

Life & Style

Kondo is back with more tidying advice in 'Spark Joy'

NEW YORK (AP)—Marie Kondo is back.

Author of the international best-seller "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up" (Ten Speed Press, 2014), Kondo became famous for advising readers how to transform their lives by sifting through their belongings one by one, embracing those that "spark joy" and bidding a fond but hasty farewell to the rest.

Her new book, "Spark Joy: an Illustrated Master Class on the Art of Organizing and Tidying Up" (Ten Speed), provides illustrations and more detail.

"After I published my first book, a lot of readers came with a lot of questions," the petite, soft-spoken Kondo told The Associated Press, in Japanese, after a presentation to a packed auditorium at the Japan Society in New York.

Kondo is still communing lovingly with socks and blouses, folding clothes like origami and bowing in gratitude to her home. She also has a fresh perspective as a new mother.

AP

This image released by Ten Speed Press shows Marie Kondo, author of the international best-seller, "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up," and her latest book, "Spark Joy: an Illustrated Master Class on the Art of Organizing and Tidying Up."

"My daughter is only 6 months old, so my method hasn't changed ... She cannot make a mess yet. What has surprised me most is the amount of stuff a baby needs," Kondo said, sitting primly at the edge of her seat in an impeccable white top over a pale blue print dress.

"Once she gets older, I'm sure there will be a little bit of adjustment."

With an understated sense of humor, she notes in her new book that one of the people with whom she has had to share her storage methods is her new husband, himself so minimalist that he moved in with only four cardboard boxes of belongings.

"I am learning that unspoken family rules differ from one household to another, and that storage methods I had assumed were obvious need to be properly shared and explained," she writes.

Kondo's earlier book had no illustrations; "Spark Joy" is full of her charming, child-like drawings of everything from organized kitchen cupboards, to folding techniques for clothes ranging from underwear to frilly blouses to hoodies.

"It is very important that you know how to fold clothes in the correct way," she informed the crowd at the Japan Society, before daintily approaching a demonstration table where a small pile of unfolded clothing awaited. For one thing, "make sure you put a lot of love through your palms," she said.

The audience—die-hard fans and those new to her Kon-Mari Method—applauded as Kondo quickly folded one item after another into a tiny cube, balanced each on edge to show how tightly wound it was, then tucked them neatly into what resembled a lidless shoe box.

"Wow, that's so cool. How did she do that?" a man in the second row whispered to his neighbor.

Kondo suggests setting the boxes of origami-esque parcels in drawers so that each is a joy-provoking bento of delights.

What about those pesky possessions that fail to spark joy yet are undeniably useful? Well, functionality can be beautiful too.

"After discarding a hammer because the handle was worn out, I used my frying pan to pound in any nails," Kondo writes. But after she threw out a screwdriver, "I tried using a ruler to tighten a loose screw, but it snapped down the middle. This almost reduced me to tears as it was one I really liked."

"All these incidents stemmed from youthful inexperience and thoughtlessness," she continues. Things that make life simpler, "the recognition that a possession is useful in our lives—these, too, indicate joy."

"Spark Joy" includes advice on moving, packing and decorating with tiny, cheerful knickknacks (this is smile-inducing minimalism).

She even gives a nod to those who don't thrill to tidying up. Kondo admitted to her New York audience that she regrets some of her earlier zeal in discarding her family's belongings.

Or, as she says in the new book, "Only when we accept unconditionally people whose values differ from our own can we really say that we have finished tidying."

Newcomer James Bay is ready to rock at the Grammy Awards

NEW YORK (AP)—For rock singer James Bay, receiving not one or two—but three—Grammy nominations for his debut album is "insane." That's because Bay, 25, remembers how scary it was to finally record music after performing around Europe for more than 10 years.

"It's one of those situations ... (where) there's as much anxiety as there is excitement," Bay said in a recent interview. "Recording it was a kind of a scary thing because it was very unknown. ... I did my first show when I was 14 ... (and) recording is not something I'm familiar with."

Enter Jacquire King, the Grammy-winning producer-engineer-mixer who worked on Kings of Leon's colossal hit "Use Somebody" as well as songs for Tom Waits, Norah Jones and others. Bay had put King at the top of his list of dream producers to help him not only craft good songs, but also develop his own style and sound.

"Literally I opened up a couple of his demos ... about five minutes into them ... I was totally onboard," King said. "I loved his voice."

At the Grammys, airing live Feb. 15 from the Staples Center in Los Angeles, Bay is being recognized for a wide range of his talents: There's his songwriting (best rock song for "Hold Back the River"); his full body of work (rock album for "Chaos and the Calm"); and his overall artistry as a singer-to-watch on the music scene (best new artist).

"Awards are fun, but the Grammys are pretty damn special," said Bay, who grew up in England and regularly rocks a fedora. "I didn't think about awards too much growing up, I really, really didn't, but I always recognized the Grammys and thought, 'Wow, that would be fun one day to get nominated for one of those.' It's a bit of a dream come true."

His debut album, released last March and recorded with King in Nashville, Tennessee, is a rock adventure that explores elements of indie rock, soft rock, Americana, folk, blues and pop rock - all with the guitar at the forefront. "Best Fake Smile" and "Hold Back the River" are thumping, passionate tunes; "If You Ever Want to Be in Love" is a sweet mid-tempo love song; "Let It Go," which is rising on Billboard Hot 100 chart, is a winning slow burner.

And the album's opening track, "Craving," best describes Bay's ambitious attitude for wanting more.

"I got trapped into too many bar jobs in the same small town. As you mature and you grow and you sort of develop new tastes for new things, I didn't want any of that anymore, and I wanted something different. And it was all spurred on by wanting to play music," Bay said.

"Chaos and the Calm" became one of the top-selling albums last year in the U.K., where it debuted at No. 1. Bay is nominated for four Brit Awards—including British album and single of the year—at the Feb. 24 awards show.

But Bay isn't only being recognized with awards: The budding singer has been praised by rock vets Keith Richards and Ronnie Wood, whom Bay has performed with.

"It's really hard to put into words, but it makes me feel like things are on a whole other level," he said of the love from The Rolling Stones members. "It's an amazing, surreal experience."

Bay's raw vocals and skilled guitar playing translate at live shows, where he has won over audiences. He'll be able to do it again when he performs at the Grammys.

"He understands how to channel that stuff and emote ... and give the song and the performance energy and real emotion," King said, "and people respond to that."

In Celebration of His New Life

†Juan Diego Angailen Urumelog

Lovingly known as "JD"

September 12, 1961 – January 22, 2016

In his new life, he now join his:

Father: †Wanter Kus
Father-In-law: †Guillermo Cabrera Deleon Guerrero
Mother-In-law: †Juana Aguero Deleon Guerrero
Sisters: †Herna A. Urumelog, †Cecilia K. Deleon Guerrero, †Vivian G. Wheeler
Brothers: †Donald A. Urumelog, †John Joe A. Urumelog, †Mariano Gustaf
Sisters-In-law: †Remedio DLG. Villagomez, †Rosario DLG. Villagomez, †Elizabeth A. Deleon Guerrero, †Nini A. Deleon Guerrero, †Frances S. Deleon Guerrero, †Rufina P. Deleon Guerrero
Brothers-In-law: †Daniel DLG. Aldan, †Jack T. Mettao, †Ricardo K. Omar, †Vicente A. Deleon Guerrero, †Pasqual A. Deleon Guerrero, †Jose A. Deleon Guerrero, †Takeyo Nakazato, †Daniel T. Villagomez, †Antonio T. Villagomez, †Juan Pangelinan

He will also be missed by numerous uncles, aunts, cousins, nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

His memories will forever live in the hearts of his:

Wife: **Bernadita DLG. Urumelog**
Children: **Kimberly U.** & Manuel V. Degracia (Manuel Jr.), **Jonathan** Urumelog, **Jocylin** Urumelog & Jacob Ilo
Mother: Concepcion A. Urumelog
Sisters: Antonia A. Urumelog and Family, Vivian U. Aldan and Family, Rowena A. Urumelog
Brothers: Patrick A. Urumelog, Steven A. Urumelog, Abel Kileleman
Sisters-In-law: Angelina A. Deleon Guerrero, Mariana Deleon Guerrero, Ronald L. Hansen and Family, Ramona DLG. Pangelinan and Family, Lourdes DLG. Nakazato and Family
Brothers-In-law: Roman A. Deleon Guerrero and family, Jesus A. & Visitacion (Vicky) T. Deleon Guerrero and Family, Lorenzo A. Deleon Guerrero and family

Nightly rosary for the repose of his soul is at 7:00 pm at Kristo Rai Church.

Funeral Services will be held tomorrow, January 30, 2016. His remains will be escorted from Nuestra Senora dela Paz Memorial Chapel at 7:30 am to Santa Soledad Church. Responso Service will be at 8:00 am followed by Holy Rosary at 8:15 am. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:00 am followed by Interment service at Sanctuario Pax Memorial Gardens in Kagman, where he will be at a peaceful rest.

Un Dangkulu Na Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Olomwaay and Thank you.

Bernadita DLG. Urumelog, Children and Family

Blanchett to make Broadway debut in Chekhov play

NEW YORK (AP)—Cate Blanchett will make her Broadway debut next winter in Anton Chekhov's first—and long-forgotten—play.

The Oscar winner and Academy Award nominee this year for "Carol" will star in "The Present" opposite Richard Roxburgh in the production that originated at the Sydney Theatre Company last summer.

It is adapted by Andrew Upton, Blanchett's playwright husband and former artistic director of the Sydney Theatre Company. It will be directed by John Crowley, who directed the film "Brooklyn" and "A Behanding in Spokane" on Broadway.

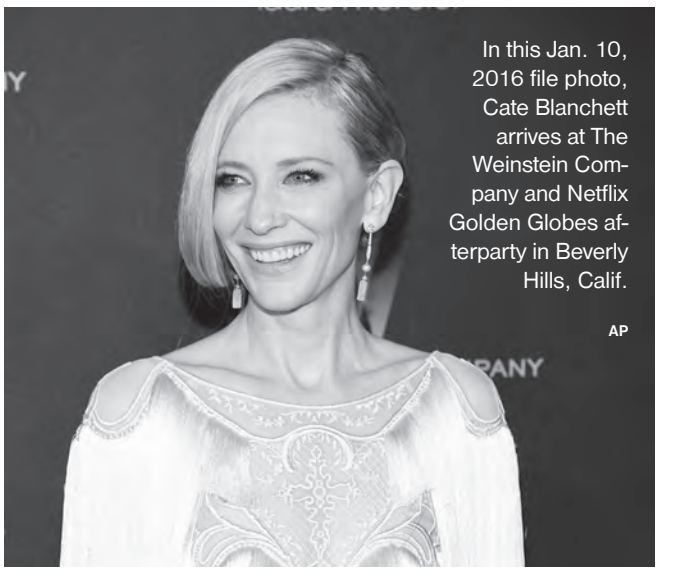
Blanchett and Roxburgh previously appeared together off-Broadway in 2012 in Upton's adaptation of Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya." Blanchett has also appeared in stage productions of "Hedda Gabler," ''A Streetcar Named Desire" and "The Maids."

"The Present," also known as "Platonov," centers on Anna Petrovna, who is celebrating her 40th birthday at her summer home in the country. She holds a party that includes uncomfortably mismatched collection of characters.

Chekhov wrote it as a young medical student in the 1880s but it went nowhere and the playwright put it aside. It was unearthed in a Moscow bank vault in 1920, 16 years after his death.

Chekhov's original version, which was set during the end of the 19th century and the conception of communism, has been relocated to the end of the 20th century. Over the years, it's been given other titles, including "The Disinherited," ''Wild Honey" and "Fatherlessness."

The new version will be produced on Broadway by Stuart Thompson and Sydney Theatre Company. The theater where it will play and other casting will be announced later.



In this Jan. 10, 2016 file photo, Cate Blanchett arrives at The Weinstein Company and Netflix Golden Globes afterparty in Beverly Hills, Calif.

AP

Obama weighs in on controversy over all-white Oscar slate

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama has weighed in on the outcry over two straight years of all-white acting nominees for the Academy Awards.

Obama says the Oscar debate is an expression of a broader issue: "Are we making sure that everybody is getting a fair shot?"

Obama spent part of Wednesday talking to local television stations about ramping up enrollment for health insurance coverage. But the ABC affiliate in Los Angeles, KABC, asked Obama about this year's Oscar controversy.

The Academy Awards take place next month. Some are calling for boycotts because no acting nominees were black.

Obama says the film industry should do what others should do as well: "Look for talent and provide opportunity to everybody."

Sundance films take on mass shootings and guns in America

PARK CITY, Utah (AP)—Gun violence was on the minds of more than a few filmmakers this year.

The ongoing issue was the main subject of four new films at the Sundance Film Festival—two feature documentaries ("Newtown," "Under the Gun") one short documentary, "Speaking is Difficult," and one feature, "Dark Night."

The wave of films dealing with essentially the same subject—mass shootings in America—is both a coincidence and an indicator that the filmmaking community is engaging with the national consciousness.

"We don't program films based on ideas we have of what issues we want to spark conversations about at the festival. We respond to the films," said Trevor Groth, Sundance's director of programming. "Those films stood out to us because of the way they were made and the power within them."

Sundance founder Robert Redford echoed Groth's sentiments, joking that if they did seek out certain issues to spotlight, he'd make sure there would be lots of environmentalist films. But he also sees why the gun issue is so urgent for filmmakers.

"Guns, of course, are a big issue," Redford said. "It's not just going to sit there because the deaths keep coming. It's going to keep rising up and rising up and it's going to get heated and I think there will be some resolve of some kind. I think it's time."

"Speaking Is Difficult" director AJ Schnack believes the multiple films were borne out of frustration and a feeling of powerlessness.

"I think it's great that filmmakers are addressing this topic and are going to come at it from a bunch of different perspectives," Schnack said. "It gives people permission to ignite those conversations in their communities and with their families and elected officials."

Here's a look at the various ways filmmakers tackled the subject:

NEWTOWN

Director Kim Snyder goes deep into the community of Newtown, Connecticut, in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings where 20 children and 6 educators were murdered.

In her documentary, Snyder explores the lives of those affected by the tragedy - the parents of children who were killed, parents of children who survived, Sandy Hook teachers, local law enforcement, religious leaders, and even a volunteer EMT.

"I didn't really have any big agenda," Snyder said, other than showing the community truthfully. "But, as (Sandy Hook parent) David Wheeler says, the people who have the most motivation to allow that intrusion of a camera are people who, as he said, feel compelled to say something or do something that might prevent another town or family from having to go through this."

DARK NIGHT

"Dark Night" is the sole narrative feature in the bunch, and deals with a mass shooting in a Florida suburb. The not-so-oblique title references the Aurora, Colorado, massacre of 2012 during a midnight screening of "The Dark Knight Rises."

"It starts with the massacre in Aurora," director Tim Sutton said. "There was something that happened to the movie theater that day. The movie theater became unsafe. It became corrupted, possibly forever. I felt as a filmmaker a responsibility to try to touch on this theme."

UNDER THE GUN

Katie Couric and director Stephanie Soechtig ("Fed Up") returned to Sundance with a sweeping overview of guns in America—melding jaw-dropping stats (like how gun stores outnumber Starbucks and McDonald's combined in the U.S.), historical perspective (how the NRA used to stay out of politics), and emotional accounts from the families of the deceased (including mothers in Chicago and the brother of a girl killed in Aurora). They also speak to a variety of pro-gun advocates, from those who support background checks to those who scoff at the idea.

"Even people who've been immersed in this issue for years told us they learned some things from the film," Couric said. "I was surprised how the NRA's tentacles spread so far and wide and how the organization has its finger prints on so many things."

SPEAKING IS DIFFICULT

"Speaking is Difficult" may never be finished. The short documentary is a living film, meaning every time there is another mass shooting, director AJ Schnack and his team will update it. He'd submitted a rough cut of the film to Sundance months ago and had to update it twice since then as new events occurred.

Schnack's film shows the locations of the shootings, as they exist now, overlaid with 911 calls from the event.

"It's becoming almost a ritual where an event happens, there is a level of outrage for a few days and then as it gets further away it recedes and we go through it again," Schnack said. "The events were starting to become like echoes of previous events."

Schnack found the nownormalcy of the settings quite striking.

"A lot of the locations have returned to being the same place—a restaurant, a salon, a school," he said. "People walk past as if nothing has happened."

Dad resists coming clean about his youthful nose job

DEAR ABBY: I'm a male in my early 50s. As a shy 21-year-old, I had minor surgery to straighten a small (but at the time, to me, ginormous) hump on my nose. I didn't tell many people and it boosted my confidence, and although I can't say I regret it, looking back I don't think it was really needed. I met my wife a few years later and didn't think it was important enough to mention, which doesn't bother me.

What does bother me is my daughter, 23 and happily married, is complaining about the small hump on her nose and seriously contemplating surgery to fix it. She says she's the only one in the family with such a nose. Her husband and my wife, neither one of whom are fans of minor cosmetic surgery, are urging her to not do it. I have kept my mouth shut so far.

I hate bringing something up I've kept from my wife all these years, yet I have this nagging feeling I'm betraying my daughter by not telling her she has the nose I was born with. I also worry that she'll find out and feel betrayed if I say nothing. Am I obligated to tell her? Am I a jerk if I don't? Does she have a right to know about her father's true nose?

INDECISIVE DAD IN THE USA

DEAR INDECISIVE: You are behaving as though a rhinoplasty is something to be ashamed of. It's not! Speak up and tell your wife your daughter inherited your nose and that fixing yours gave you self-confidence. Then be honest with your daughter. She's an adult. What she chooses to do with the nose on her face should be her decision and no one else's because no one else will be wearing it.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: A year ago, my boyfriend of two years and I broke up. We had never had an argument. Then one night we did, and we both said things we shouldn't have. Since that day, he hasn't spoken to me again. He has ignored all my phone calls and my attempts to work things out. I have tried to move on, but I can't seem to. I have been devastated ever since because I truly loved him.

I recently started seeing a guy I like, but when it comes down to it, I can't let go of my ex-boyfriend. I am paralyzed by my emotions. Mostly I feel betrayed. He has destroyed every perception I had about relationships, like being there for each other through the good and bad. How can I help myself heal?

MOTIONLESS IN GEORGIA

DEAR MOTIONLESS: Not all romances are meant to lead to marriage. Intelligent adults don't necessarily agree on everything, but they should be mature enough to discuss their differences without resorting to vitriol. If your ex-boyfriend's reaction to a disagreement was to run for the hills, better that you learned it after two years rather than, say, five.

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

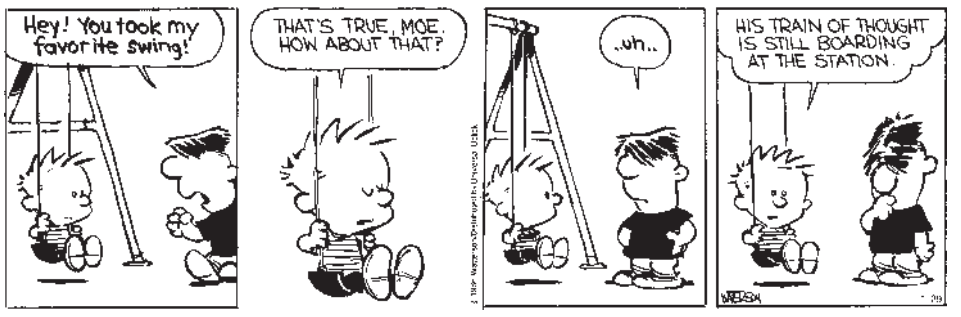
I subscribe to the philosophy that our relationships—whether successful or failed—teach us important lessons about life. Sometimes we must accept life as it is rather than our fantasy of what we would like it to be. Because you haven't been able to progress beyond the romance you had with your ex, you will save yourself additional pain and wasted time if you discuss it with a licensed mental health professional.

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

Pastimes

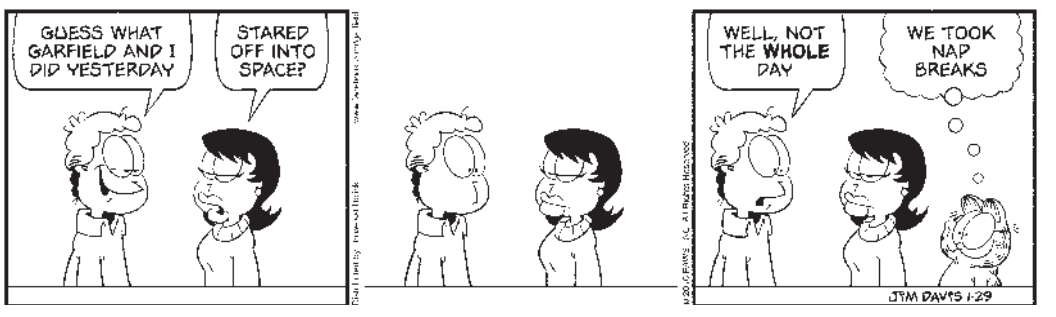
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



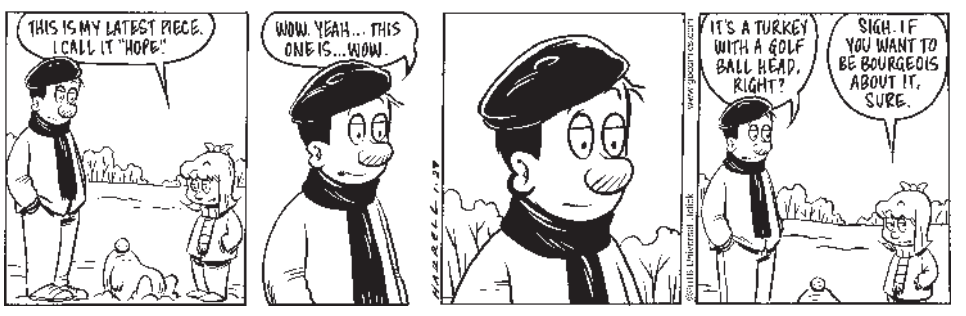
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



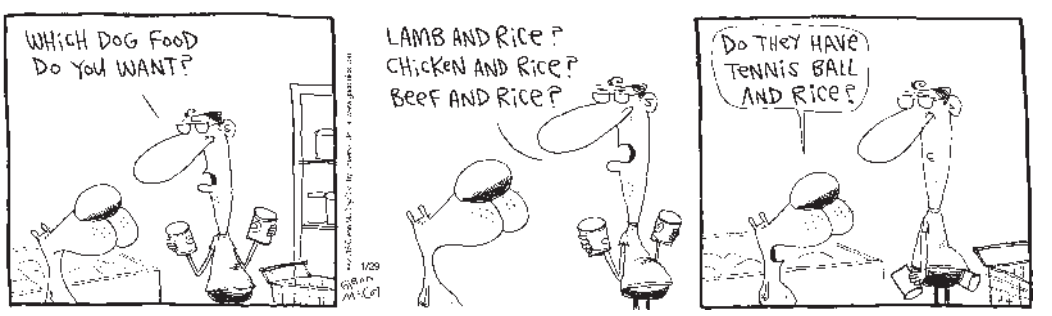
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


THIS IS MY LATEST PIECE. I CALL IT "HOPE."
WOW. YEAH... THIS ONE IS...WOW.
IT'S A TURKEY WITH A GOLF BALL HEAD, RIGHT?
SIGH. IF YOU WANT TO BE BOURGEOIS ABOUT IT, SURE.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

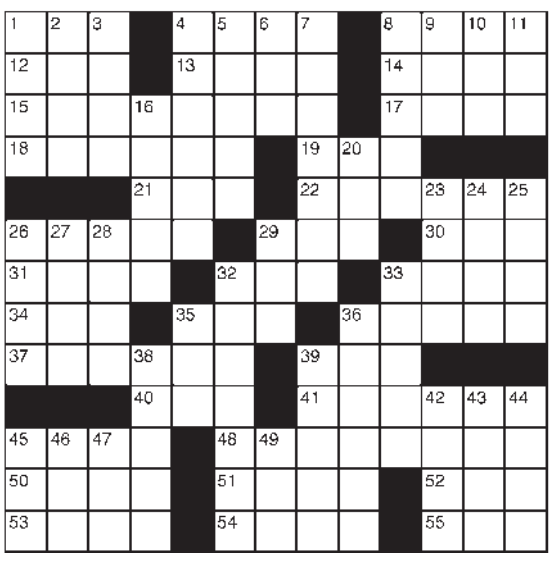
ACROSS
1 Unruly crowd
4 Epic tale
8 Slothful
12 Jurist Fortas
13 Prudish
14 "Got it!"
15 Mexican staple
17 Camera part
18 Prof's job security
19 Day, to Juan
21 — Tin Tin
22 Squire
26 General Scowcroft
29 Boy king
30 Pizza unit
31 Fixes a squeak
32 Gloomy —
33 First-rate
34 Sault — Marie
35 Sly one
36 Aquariums
37 Frolic
39 "Crying" singer Orbison
40 Eastern path
41 One-celled creature
45 Unruly kid
48 Spain's neighbor
50 Tiresome person
51 Butter stand-in
52 — Dhabi
53 Blacken
54 Senate stint
55 Moon vehicle

DOWN
1 Lauer of "Today"
2 Bassoon kin
3 Swiss capital
4 Team morale
5 Sen. Specter
6 Baseball's Hodges
7 Mozart's middle name
8 Pale purple
9 Enzyme suffix
10 Buddhism type
11 "Indeed!"
16 Goes bad
20 Ending for "real"
23 Ajar, say
24 Jeopardize
25 Hanoi holidays
26 Pear type
27 Moreno or Hayworth
28 Everest stat
29 Rented prom suit
32 Deteriorate
33 Ronstadt's "Blue —"
35 Monk's title
36 Tribal drum
38 Cove critter
39 More scarce
42 The same (Fr.)
43 Naive one
44 Reunion attendee
45 Small ammo
46 Wade foe
47 Coach Parseghian
49 Flamenco cheer

Solution time: 26 mins.

D	A	I	E	■	J	O	E	S	■	K	O	P
A	S	I	S	■	O	V	E	N	■	E	P	A
M	I	L	K	S	H	A	K	E	■	E	A	T
N	A	T	I	O	N	■	■	A	P	P	L	E
■	■	■	M	Y	■	M	I	D	A	S	■	■
O	H	S	O	■	B	O	O	■	L	A	D	Y
R	O	W	■	R	O	T	■	■	K	E	A	■
B	E	A	T	■	I	D	A	■	D	E	S	K
■	■	N	I	F	T	Y	■	F	E	■	■	■
O	G	I	F	R	■	■	S	F	I	D	O	M
M	A	A	■	O	N	■	H	E	T	A	K	E
E	L	K	■	G	U	R	U	■	A	T	A	T
N	A	E	■	S	T	U	N	■	S	A	Y	S

Yesterday's answer 1-29



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Sara Gilbert, 41; Heather Graham, 46; Oprah Winfrey, 62; Tom Selleck, 71.

Happy Birthday: Do what feels right to you, not what others are pushing you to do. It's important to follow through with your plans and head in the direction that will bring you the most in return. You may not please everyone this year, but it's important to try to accomplish the things that will make your life meaningful. Walk away from bad situations. Your numbers are 9, 13, 23, 31, 35, 43, 49.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): An emotional wake-up call will get you back on track. Don't give in to demands or pressures you don't deserve. Make a point not to wait for anyone else to do things for you. Take charge and forge ahead. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Research, discussions, information and getting a different perspective on what you want to do will help you make wise choices and may lead to interesting encounters with unique individuals. Travel will help you expand your interests and professional options. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Make clear-cut decisions and refuse to get tangled up in someone else's problems. Keep your distance and focus on making personal changes that will improve your emotional well-being. Follow the trends that work best for you. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Emotional matters will be hard to ignore. Back away from anyone who is causing unpredictable problems. Keep a clear head and concentrate on what you can do to make your surroundings conducive to taking care of unfinished business. ✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): A change of pace will give you a new perspective on life. Don't expect everyone you encounter to be in a good mood. Avoid arguments and don't make decisions based on too little evidence or knowledge. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Do something you enjoy. Plan a trip or get-together with friends or the youngsters in your life. Take on a challenge that will help you get in shape or sharpen your mind. Explore new forms of entertainment and update your image. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Stop and take note of what others are doing. Refuse to let anyone meddle in your affairs. Don't share personal secrets. Make plans to do something that eases your mind and your stress. An unexpected change at home will be to your benefit. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Group endeavors or contributing to a cause that interests you will pay big dividends. Someone you meet will be seeking your attention. Mixing your talents with those of others will bring unusual results. Romance is in the stars. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Look in to positions that interest you. Put your heart and soul into whatever jobs you do. Revamp your resume, apply for a job or go for an interview. You can dazzle others with your charm and know-how. Make changes at home. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Take care of your personal affairs. Stay on top of your professional and financial options, and don't let someone else make decisions for you. Emotional uncertainty is apparent, but you will come out on top if you follow your heart. ✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Don't burden yourself with more than you can handle. Consider what you can accomplish and do your best to forge ahead. Your fearless attitude will make people stand up and take notice. Let your emotions dictate your next move. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Pay off your debts, close out deals and take care of unfinished business. Once you have everything in place, you can better enjoy getting interested in something that is new, exciting and brings you great joy. Romance is encouraged. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are proactive and innovative. You are a troubleshooter and a peacekeeper.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	6	2				3	8	
	5		3		6		9	
	8		7		2		4	
6								3
	9		5		4		6	
	4		1		8		5	
	2	5				6	7	

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 1/29

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

1	5	2	9	3	8	7	6	4
4	6	3	5	2	7	9	8	1
9	8	7	4	1	6	3	2	5
7	4	6	1	8	5	2	9	3
3	1	5	2	6	9	8	4	7
8	2	9	7	4	3	1	5	6
6	9	4	3	7	2	5	1	8
5	3	1	8	9	4	6	7	2
2	7	8	6	5	1	4	3	9

Difficulty Level ★★★

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

PINTEREST Solution: 5 letters

S	N	E	T	I	S	B	E	W	C	A	R	T	G	G
S	G	C	V	E	S	K	L	M	P	C	H	A	I	R
E	I	N	O	I	L	C	I	O	A	C	M	F	E	D
N	S	E	I	L	T	B	I	D	G	E	T	D	N	T
T	E	I	I	D	L	A	A	A	S	Ⓢ	Ⓣ	Ⓔ	Ⓟ	N
I	D	C	N	E	D	E	E	Y	R	S	S	M	G	E
F	S	S	V	S	P	E	C	R	U	R	O	M	N	M
T	T	A	I	H	R	I	W	T	C	B	A	D	I	M
A	R	S	T	A	A	L	R	L	I	K	O	R	N	O
T	O	R	E	R	H	O	A	L	E	O	N	A	E	C
T	P	E	R	E	S	U	E	U	F	V	N	O	D	R
O	S	T	C	E	J	O	R	P	S	G	A	B	R	A
O	E	S	W	O	R	B	I	N	O	I	H	S	A	F
S	G	O	L	A	T	A	C	A	R	S	V	T	G	T
Y	L	P	P	U	S	I	L	B	E	R	M	A	N	N

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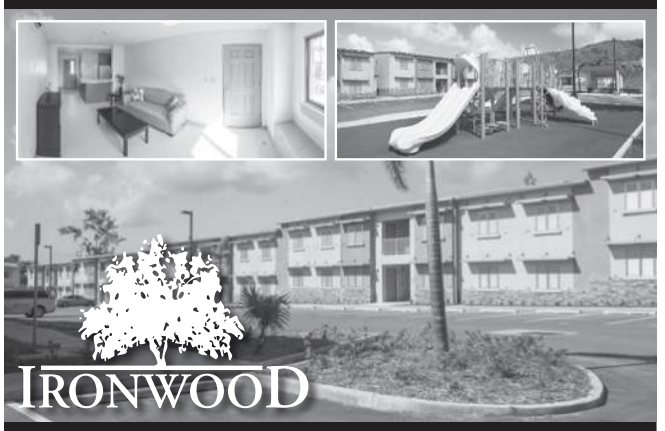
Yesterday's Answer: Mirin

Jo's Jewels Collector's Edition is back by popular demand! Purchase online at www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480. (Contains 120 puzzles.)

CLASSIFIED ADS

SECTION 8 VOUCHER ACCEPTED



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Key Responsibilities
- Pulling inventory for each installation job
- Pre-assemble job components in the warehouse
- Layout and assembly of solar modules / array and mounting hardware
- Mechanical/structural mounting of racking, modules and electrical equipment
- Electrical wiring of solar array/system (AC and DC)

Qualifications
- 1 year of roof work, general construction, or electrical required. Previous solar experience strongly preferred.
- Must be able to lift 50lbs, ability to work in extreme environments (example: heat, sun, etc)
- Must be willing and able to climb ladders, stairs, work on rooftops and able to work on your feet for long periods of time
- Basic computer skills including familiarity with Microsoft Office programs
- High school diploma or GED required
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills required
- Excellent customer service skills required
- Must be able to successfully pass a pre-employment criminal, driving and drug screen
- Must have a valid CNMI driver's license and clean driving record

Email resumes to Lara at lozaki@micronesiarenewableenergy.com
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Solar Energy Contracts Administrator

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Key Responsibilities
- Supervise the entire project flow process from the initial contract signing through the construction of the project
- Supervise the paperwork and permitting process of various residential solar installations
- Produce and submit documentation such as permits, and interconnection agreements

Qualifications
- Have strong project contracts administrative experience
- 1 to 3 years of construction administration experience
- Excellent written and verbal communication
- Must be self-motivated and goal orientated
- Completely tech savvy including experience in CRM programs, and Microsoft Office.
- A self-starter, able to work with limited supervision.

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EMPLOYMENT

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Key Responsibilities
- Speaking with customers about Micronesia Renewable Energy and our partner SUNNOVA's clean energy solutions
- Driving the creation of leads to meet personal and team sales goals
- Collaborating with Outside Solar Sales Consultants to confirm in-home appointments
- Setting up Micronesia Renewable Energy displays and collateral
- Hosting and conducting seminars and events for 20 or more people

Qualifications
- 2 years prior experience in a quota-driven sales
- Prior experience generating customer leads
- Proficient with Excel and MS Outlook (+CRM tool preferred)
- Slightly obsessive about providing a great customer experience, in all the right ways
- High energy, even higher integrity
- Articulate with excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Excellent customer service skills required
- Must be flexible working weekend, evening and holidays
- Min 18 years of age with a high school degree, recent college grads preferred
- Must have a valid state driver's license and clean driving record
- Must be able to successfully pass a pre-employment criminal, driving, and drug screen

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dba: Kinpachi Japanese Restaurant

Restaurant Waitress (3): Greeting Customers. Must be able to speak basic Japanese & efficient English & have a friendly & outgoing personality. Should be knowledgeable of the restaurant dishes, familiar with the entire menu the establishment offers. Can introduce & recommend daily specials as well as the restaurant's regular menu items. Continued services after the meal have been served and accept payments & other duties related.

Additional Requirements: All applicants must be of good health and have a good moral character, must be able to follow grooming standards, must be able to obtain required food handler health certificate, must be able to provide current police clearance, with reliable transportation and must agree to drug test. Can work in flexible hours including weekends and night time. We prefer full time applicants.

Applicants of position listed above are required to have a minimum of 3 months experience.

We are an equal opportunity employer. Qualified applicants will be considered. Applications can be picked up at Kinpachi Japanese Restaurant (MISA Bldg. 1) in Coral Tree Avenue, Garapan. Please no phone calls.

Kanoa Resort
Saipan

(1) A/C REFRIGERATION MECHANIC/TECHNICIAN
Qualifications: Completion of an apprenticeship program or two (2) years of experience. Require post-secondary instruction from technical and trade schools or community colleges that offer programs in air-conditioning and refrigeration and/or associate's degree. Able to install and repair industrial and commercial refrigeration systems. Perform a wide array of duties, inspect, maintain and troubleshoot centralized A/C cooling tower. Must be able to work a variable schedule including early mornings, evenings and/or weekends.

Interested applicants may send their applications to hr@kanoaresort.com. Application forms may be obtained at our Security Office located at the back wing of our resort. To be considered, applicants must be submitted not later than February 04, 2016. Background checks and pre-employment drug testing will be required prior to employment.

Kanoa Resort is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Qualified Women, Minorities, Veterans and Persons with Disabilities are urged to apply.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY IN-HOUSE ANNOUNCEMENT

Opening Date: February 1, 2016
Closing Date: March 1, 2016

Position: **Accountant I**
Salary: **PL 30/01 – $22,576.96 to PL 30/06 - $30,246.740 P/A**
(Starting salary will be determined by the qualifications of the appointee.)

Job Location: NMHC Central Office, Garapan, Saipan, MP 96950

Detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be picked up, together with NMHC's employment application form, during regular working hours at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan during regular working hours, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except CNMI and austerity holidays.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

Applicants are requested to submit their original application and supporting documents to the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, no later than 4:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 1, 2016, **OR MAILED AND POSTMARKED** no later than March 1, 2016, to the Corporate Director, Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, P. O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Ms. Jocelyn C. Seman, Office Manager at (670) 234-9447/7689 or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/ **JESSE S. PALACIOS**
Corporate Director

USDA UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Loss Adjuster

The USDA, Farm Service Agency is accepting applications for two (2) Loss Adjuster positions – one (1) on Rota and one (1) on Saipan. Applicants MUST have experience in Tropical Agriculture. A Loss Adjuster is an independent contractor who will visit farms for the purpose of inspecting, measuring, and appraising agricultural crops. A Loss Adjuster will also ensure compliance with acreage and production reporting requirements. Training will be provided. Pay begins at $10.00 per hour for orientation, formal classroom, and on the job training. Pay will increase to $18.00 per hour after successful completion and certification. Authorized travel expenses for training will be paid.

Interested applicants may inquire with the Guam County FSA Office at (671) 300-8550. Completed applications must be submitted by close of business February 8, 2016 to the Guam County FSA Office, 770 E. Sunset Blvd., Suite 265, Barrigada, Guam 96913. Fax: (855) 356-9491.

The Farm Service Agency is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. **16-005**

Opening Date: **Friday, January 29, 2016**
Closing Date: **Thursday, February 11, 2016**

Trades Assistant (Electrician)

Duties: Under the direct supervision of the Power Generation Manager or his/her designee. Assists with the safe and efficient operation of all plant equipment and machinery including, but not limited to, incinerators, generators, operation of valves, plant production operations, and unloading of diesel fuel tank trucks to storage tanks. Primary duties are as a TRADES ASSISTANT ELECTRICIAN: Follows all safety and operations procedures during operations and maintenance activities; Monitoring Plant systems as assigned; Prepares job site for work including gathering and setting up materials and supplies, and setting work safety barriers for protection; Gathers, cleans and returns equipment, materials and supplies used; Cleans and maintains work site after project or repair work is complete; Monitors equipment; takes readings and collects data; documents equipment readings; prepares and submits data and work reports; Performs inventory spot checks to ensure adequate materials and supplies are available for daily work activities; Assisting with equipment inspections, cleaning, corrosion control, and painting; Operating incinerators; oil and water separator pump, servicing and preparing oil filters; Maintaining grounds, trimming trees and removing debris and housekeeping; Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

LOCATION : **Power Generation**, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
(If needed, there may be periodic assignment to other divisions of CUC and/or other islands.)
SALARY : $16,742.00 per annum.
CONTRACT : Not Contracted.
POSITION(S) : Four (4)

Minimum Requirements: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS. Training and knowledge in operations repair, and maintenance of power generating and/or industrial equipment/facilities desired but not required. Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology. Skills in: Operating heavy and light equipment machinery, hand and power tools required of assigned area; Adhering to safety procedures and safe work practices; Prioritizing tasks and managing time for efficiency; Identifying issues and solving problems; Providing attention to detail; Taking equipment readings and recording data; Maintaining activity logs and reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Must Able to lift and carry heavy objects of 45 pounds and over, climb ladders, reach above the shoulders, stand, sit, crawl and kneel for prolonged periods and perform repeated bending. Recognize color codes, operate cranes and motor vehicles. Work inside around machinery in operation; in varying degree of temperature in tight or cramped (confined) work spaces, at heights, on ladders or scaffolds, and on slippery or uneven walking surfaces in close proximity to high and low voltage circuits and climbs stairs frequently. Occasionally use solvents, de-greasing agents, or other chemical agents, and be assigned to protracted or irregular hours of work. Work in environments exposed to dust, oil, grease, constant or excessive noise, vibration, and smoke and gas fumes. Work closely with others and/or alone depending on assigned daily activities. Must be available to work a 24/7 rotation shift to include weekends and holidays, may be on call for emergency response. Applicants may be tested. Subject to pre-employment drug test.

Drop off your CUC Employment Application at the CUC Human Resource Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan. Otherwise, you may drop it off at the Tinian and Rota Administration Office.

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer
P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950-1220 U.S.A.
Tel. No. (670) 664-4282 Fax (670) 235-5131

COMMONWEALTH CASINO COMMISSION
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
P.O. Box 500237
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. +1 (670) 233-1857
Facsimile: +1 (670) 233-1856
E-mail: info@cnmicasinocommission.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Opening Date: January 22, 2016 **Closing Date: February 5, 2016**

The Commonwealth Casino Commission ("Commission") announces the following Job Vacancy for immediate recruitment:

	POSITION	DIVISION	SALARY RANGE	ANNOUNCEMENT#
1.	MANAGER	Audit Division	$65,000 - $75,000	CCC-16-A
2.	AUDITOR – Financial	Audit Division	$37,000 - $42,000	CCC-16-B
3.	ACCOUNTANT	Administration Division	$30,000 - $35,000	CCC-16-C
4.	NAS/CMS ADMINISTRATOR	Executive Office	$27,000 - $32,000	CCC-16-D
5.	SPECIAL AGENT	Enforcement & Investigations	$30,000 - $35,000	CCC-16-E
6.	ENFORCEMENT AGENT I	Enforcement & Investigations	$23,000 - $28,000	CCC-16-F
7.	INSPECTOR I	Administration Division	$25,000 - $30,000	CCC-16-G
8.	PERMIT & LICENSING CLERK (2 positions)	Administration Division	$13,000 - $18,000	CCC-16-H

a) **Salary:** Actual salary level will depend on the applicant's education, experience, & other related qualifications.
b) **Location:** Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands ("CNMI").
c) **Benefits:** Basic CNMI government employment fringe benefits.
d) **Exempted Positions:** These positions are exempted from the CNMI Civil Service System per P.L. 18-56 & P.L. 19-24

Requirements:
A. CNMI Government **Application for Employment** (OPM-03) - Original
B. **Resume** with accompanying educational and professional credentials & documentations
C. **Police Clearance** (within the last 3 months)
D. Copy of your Driver's License or other form of Valid Identification

Education and training claimed under items 24 (A) through (H) of the Application for Employment must be substantiated by an official school transcript, diploma, or certificate. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification.

The Commonwealth Casino Commission is an equal employment opportunity employer. The CCC's EEO policy is to ensure that all employment decisions are made on a non-discriminatory basis, and without regard to sex, race, color, age, national origin, religion, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, political affiliation or belief, or any other status protected by applicable national, federal, state or local law. Please be informed that prior to a job offer, you are required to undergo a pre-employment drug test pursuant to the Alcohol and Drug Free Workplace Policy, Part V.C. of the Personnel Service System Rules and Regulations. The Casino Commission may also require additional criminal background checks and investigations on some positions.

Application Forms can be picked up at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). For information on the POSITION DESCRIPTIONS and Requirements, please contact Ms. Velma Apatang Lore at 233-1857/58 or at info@cnmicasinocommission.com. Interested persons should submit their Employment Application Forms along with supporting documents to the Commonwealth Casino Commission, Unit 13 & 14, Springs Plaza, Chalan Pale Arnold, Gualo Rai, Saipan, MP 96950.

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Durant, Thunder win thriller over Timberwolves

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Kevin Durant has had the ball in his hands with the game on the line so many times that he feels totally carefree in the game's biggest moments.

The young Minnesota Timberwolves stars don't have the same comfort level yet, and that was the difference on Wednesday night.

Durant had 27 points, nine rebounds and five assists, and hit two huge shots in the final two minutes to help the Oklahoma City Thunder win a second-straight, fast-paced thriller with a 126-123 victory over the Timberwolves.

"That's the most carefree time of the game for me," Durant said. "I just put them up, you know. You can't change shooting percentage that quickly. When there's 3-4 minutes to go, you can't be conservative, just shoot good shots and make the right plays."

Russell Westbrook had 24 points, 15 assists and eight rebounds, while Enes Kanter had 23 points and 10 boards for the Thunder, who beat the Knicks in overtime the night before. Oklahoma City outrebounded Minnesota 47-31 to go home from a four-game road trip at 3-1.

AP

Oklahoma City Thunder's Kevin Durant, left, drives around Minnesota Timberwolves' Andrew Wiggins in the second half of an NBA basketball game, Wednesday, Jan. 27, 2016, in Minneapolis. The Thunder won, 126-123.

Cavaliers 115, Suns 93

In Cleveland, LeBron James scored 21 points before sitting out -- and dancing -- in the fourth quarter, Kevin Love added 21 points and 11 rebounds, and the Cleveland Cavaliers stormed away in the second half for a 115-93 victory over the Phoenix Suns on Wednesday night.

Sluggish for the first 24 minutes, the Cavs opened the second half with a 12-0 run and sent Phoenix to its 17th loss in 19 games.

Cleveland improved to 2-1 under new coach Tyronn Lue, who took over last week when David Blatt was fired halfway through his second season. The win means Lue and the Cavs' coaching staff will represent the Eastern Conference at the All-Star Game on Feb. 14 in Toronto.

Spurs 130, Rockets 99

In San Antonio, LaMarcus Aldridge had 25 points and 10 rebounds, and San Antonio rebounded from its worst loss in three years to bash Houston and remain undefeated at home.

San Antonio (39-7) has won 25 straight at home to open the season and 34 consecutive dating back to last season.

Aldridge bounced back -- as did the rest of the Spurs -- after he was held to five points and three rebounds in a 30-point loss to Golden State on Monday.

San Antonio had 32 assists and shot 56 percent from the field in snapping Houston's three-game winning streak and handing the Rockets their worst loss of the season.

Clippers 85, Hawks S 83

In Atlanta, Jamal Crawford scored 21 points and Los Angeles won again without Blake Griffin, holding off mistake-prone Atlanta.

The Hawks turned it over a season-high 23 times but still had a chance to force overtime when Chris Paul lost the handle on an inbounds pass after Al Horford's free throw. Atlanta got it back with 6.7 seconds left and inbounded to Paul Millsap, who drove against Luc Mbah a Moute and got a good look at the basket but came up short on a running one-hander. The horn sounded as the Clippers celebrated their 14th win in 17 games.

Los Angeles won for the second straight night after word leaked that Griffin would be out 4-to-6 weeks, having broken his shooting hand by punching a staff member. He apologized for the incident on Twitter late Tuesday, and his teammates kept on winning.

Celtics 111, Nuggets 103

In Boston, Avery Bradley matched his season high with 27 points, and Boston beat Denver for its fourth straight victory.

Kelly Olynyk added 17 points and seven rebounds. Isaiah Thomas finished with 16 points and five assists.

The victory ties a season-high win streak for the Celtics.

Danilo Gallinari and Will Barton led Denver with 23 apiece.

Pistons 110, Sixers 97

In Auburn Hills, Andre Drummond had 25 points and 18 rebounds, and Detroit rallied to beat Philadelphia.

Drummond, who came into the game having gone 1 for 14 from the line in the last two games, even hit seven of his 12 free throws. Reggie Jackson added 27 points, while rookie Stanley Johnson had 18 off the bench.

Jeremi Grant scored 21 points for the Sixers, while Nerlens Noel had 20.

Jazz 102, Hornets 73

In Salt Lake City, Rodney Hood scored 24 points and Utah avenged a double-overtime loss to Charlotte last week.

Utah broke loose in the second quarter with a 20-2 run, highlighted by a pair of alley-oops from Hood to Rudy Gobert. Trevor Booker added a pair of dunks that pushed the lead to 38-22.

Charlotte worked the lead down to single digits in the third quarter, but a trio of 3-pointers from Trey Burke pushed the lead back up to 19.

Gordon Hayward finished with 22 points, seven rebounds and five assists for Utah. Gobert grabbed 12 rebounds and blocked three shots.

Kemba Walker was held to 15 points after scoring a franchise-high 52 against the Jazz last week.

Cam Newton: I'm an African-American QB that scares people

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Panthers quarterback Cam Newton suggested for the first time Wednesday that race may play a factor in why he's become a lightning rod for public criticism.

"I'm an African-American quarterback that scares people because they haven't seen nothing that they can compare me to," said the 6-foot-5, 245-pound Newton.

The No. 1 pick in the 2011 NFL draft out of Auburn, Newton has his share of detractors who either don't like how he plays, his celebrations or his abundance of self-confidence.

Newton, a leading league MVP candidate putting up record-breaking numbers, said he learned a long time ago that he can't please everyone.

"People are going to judge, and have opinions on things I don't have control over," Newton said.

The stout and speedy Newton is beating teams with his arm and his legs, throwing for 35 touchdowns and running for 10 this season. He has helped lead the Panthers (17-1) to their first Super Bowl since 2003. Carolina plays the AFC champion Denver Broncos on Feb. 7 in Santa Clara, California.

Newton acknowledged being leery of talking about how others may perceive him.

"I think it's a trick question," Newton said. "If I answer it truthfully it's going to be `Aw, he's this or that.' But I will say it anyway.

"I don't think people have seen what I am or what I'm trying to do."

Newton said he hasn't changed, and has previously responded to his critics.

"I said that prior to me being in this situation," Newton said of being misunderstood. "But when I said it then it was like, `Oh he is immature,' or, `Oh he's young and this that and the third.' I felt a certain type of way then and I feel a certain type of way now -- nothing has pretty much changed. They talk about maturity. They talk about skillset. ... The only thing that has changed (about me) is that we're winning now."

Panthers coach Ron Rivera doesn't believe Newton should have to fight perceptions about race.

"I think he has always strived to have that separation," Rivera said. "I don't think he wants to be known as an African-American quarterback; he wants to be known as a quarterback. I think that is what drives him, to be able to transcend those boundaries, which I think is great."

Rivera, who is Hispanic, said he has battled that notion to some degree himself.

"It really should be about your merits more than anything else," the coach said. "More about what you have accomplished, what you have done."

Rivera said some people may simply not like Newton because of his personality.

The All-Pro quarterback plays the game with open enthusiasm, pointing his arms forward after running for a first down, doing the "dab" in the end zone and pretending to rip open his shirt like Superman. He gets his teammates to pose for pictures on the sideline near the end of games when the outcome is no longer in doubt.

SIDEBAR

LeBron believes criticism he undermines coaches is unfair

INDEPENDENCE, Ohio (AP)—LeBron James disdains the notion he's a coach killer.

Widely criticized in basketball circles for a perception that he pushed for Cleveland's front office to fire David Blatt last week, James said the criticism that he undercuts coaches is unfair.

"But what can I do about it?" he said following shootaround on Wednesday as the Cavs prepared to play the Phoenix Suns.

"I've never, in my time since I picked up a basketball, ever undermined a coach, ever disrespected a coach," he said. "You ask any of my little league coaches, my high school coaches, coaches I've played for in tournaments, camps, my NBA coaches, I've always respected what they wanted to do."

Blatt was fired Friday midway through his second season despite having them atop the Eastern Conference standings and leading the team to the NBA Finals last season.

Blatt's dismissal—he's the third coach fired on a team James has played on - led to some condemnation of the four-time league MVP. On Tuesday, a limited partner with the Heat said during an interview on Israeli radio that James tried to get Erik Spoelstra fired in Miami. Ranaan Katz later retracted his statement to the South Florida Sun-Sentinel.

Blatt was replaced by Tyronn Lue, his top assistant and a former NBA player who has known James since he was a 17-year-old high school phenom.

For many, Lue's ascension was the result of James not wanting Blatt around. There was an obvious disconnect between James and Cleveland's former coach, who was wildly successful in Europe and hired by Cleveland before James decided to return to the Cavaliers as a free agent in 2014.

The James-Blatt relationship was scrutinized during both seasons and when it finally collapsed, the LeBron-got-him-fired narrative gained traction.

Although James insists that he didn't do anything to weaken Blatt's authority, there were several incidents over the past 18 months that illustrate how he didn't do his former coach any favors. James usually referred to Blatt simply as "Blatt" and often ignored Blatt during games, preferring to discuss strategy with Lue during timeouts. James also famously changed a play designed by Blatt during the playoffs last season before hitting a game-winning jumper to beat Chicago.

James said his willingness to speak his mind has led to the criticism that he's not always on the same page with his coaches.

"I'm not the owner of a team, I'm not the GM of a team, I'm the player of a team," James said.

Aguero sends Man City into League Cup final

MANCHESTER, England (AP)—Manchester City relied on a controversial decision by officials and another decisive late goal from Sergio Aguero to set up an English League Cup final against Liverpool on Wednesday.

City came from behind to beat Everton 3-1 in a compelling second leg and seal a 4-3 win on aggregate.

Aguero grabbed the clinching goal from a header in the 76th minute to complete City's recovery at Etihad Stadium, but Everton was left aggrieved that City's second goal—scored by substitute Kevin De Bruyne to level the semifinal at 3-3 -- was allowed to stand. The ball appeared to be out of play when Raheem Sterling sent in a cut-back that De Bruyne steered home.

"When the ball is out of play in the modern game, you don't expect that to be missed," Everton manager Roberto Martinez said. "It's hurtful and unfair."

City manager Manuel Pellegrini was more diplomatic, saying: "I just saw it. Maybe it was a mistake of the referee, but I think Everton cannot complain about the referee."

De Bruyne changed the game after coming on as a 66th-minute substitute, scoring within four minutes and then providing the assist for Aguero's 16th goal of the season. However, the Belgium midfielder ended the match being carried off on a stretcher—with apparent medial ligament damage to his right knee, according to Pellegrini—after falling awkwardly in a tackle in injury time.

It was the only negative on the night for City, which is still chasing trophies on four fronts domestically and in Europe. City will head to Wembley Stadium on Feb. 28 seeking a fourth League Cup title, most recently winning it in 2014.

"It will be a brilliant final," predicted Pellegrini, whose side was thrashed 4-1 by Liverpool at home in the Premier League in November.

Back to full fitness after six weeks out before Christmas, Aguero has scored seven goals in his last seven games in all competitions and looks back to his prolific best. City would be lost without him.

"Aguero you saw reach a really sharp level," Martinez said, "... but I feel it would be defended differently if it had been 1-1."

AP

Manchester City's Raheem Sterling, right, crosses a ball past Everton's John Stones. Later, replays showed it had gone out of play from which Kevin De Bruyne scored their second goal during the English League Cup semifinal second leg soccer match between Manchester City and Everton at the City of Manchester Stadium in Manchester, England, Wednesday, Jan. 27, 2016.

Martinez kept returning to City's second goal in his post-match news conference, saying it "killed our opportunity." The Spanish coach is coming under increasing pressure as results continue to go against his side, which is 12th in the 20-team Premier League.

Protecting a 2-1 lead from the first leg, Everton went further ahead on aggregate when Ross Barkley scored from long range in the 18th minute. The England midfielder seemingly found space every time he was on the ball and for the goal, he picked up the ball unmarked before drifting past a weak attempted challenge from Nicolas Otamendi, surged at the heart of City's defense and drilled home a low shot.

City now needed two goals to stay alive and the first came within six minutes, Fernandinho running onto the ball after a shot was deflected into his path and driving in a low shot that ricocheted off Leighton Baines and over goalkeeper Joel Robles.

The game was open and exciting, as good as the Liverpool-Stoke second leg on Tuesday was bad. Aguero rifled a 25-meter shot against the post late in the first half and David Silva glanced a header against the post for City soon after the break.

De Bruyne came on for Yaya Toure —to cheers from City fans—and levelled up the semifinal by sidefooting home the cross from Sterling.

Aguero had the final say on the field, once again, while Martinez was left to raise the question about whether technology is needed to adjudicate on clear decisions that are missed by officials.

"It was a game of 180 minutes," said Pellegrini, preferring to focus elsewhere, "and I think we play this semifinal in an intelligent way."

Liverpool beat Stoke in a penalty shootout to win the other semifinal.

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Serena nears 7th Australian Open title

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Serena Williams provided another reminder of her dominance in women's tennis with a 6-0, 6-4 win in the Australian Open semifinals against Agnieszka Radwanska, who is soon to move to the No. 3 ranking.

Six-time champion Williams has never lost a semifinal or final at the Australian Open, and is an overwhelming favorite to win her seventh title at Melbourne Park and claim a 22nd major. That would pull her even with Steffi Graf for the most majors in the Open era and second-most in history behind Margaret Court's 24.

The first set was no contest, over in 20 minutes. Williams hit 18 winners and Radwanska, in her fifth major semifinal, had one—in the fourth game.

The second set was closer, with Radwanska holding serve three times and breaking Serena's powerful serve once. But the 34-year-old Williams lifted again to finish it off, winning the last eight points and closing with three aces and a big forehand winner.

Despite all her success, it is a loss that is inspiring Williams in this tournament. She was two wins away from a calendar-year Grand Slam in 2015 when she lost to Roberta Vinci in the U.S. Open semifinals.

"Physically I'm feeling a lot better, mentally I needed that break after the Open," she said, but "I didn't think I would do this well this fast.

"I'm really excited to be in the final—it just kind of blows my mind right now."

AP

Serena Williams of the United States celebrates after winning a point against Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland during their semifinal match at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne, Australia, Thursday, Jan. 28, 2016.

Williams remains unbeaten in nine matches against Radwanska, whom she beat in the 2012 Wimbledon final. She'll next meet the winner of Thursday's later match between No. 7-seeded Angelique Kerber and No. 47-ranked Johanna Konta, the first British woman since 1983 to reach a major semifinal.

Radwanksa said there will little she could do in the first set to combat Williams, "she started unbelievable, with such a power and speed. I was just standing there kind of watching her playing."

"I had my little chance in second set, especially when it was 4-all," she said, "But otherwise just too good.

"You know, if she's playing her game, it's a different level ... I don't think anyone (else) can really play on that level."

With the roof on Rod Laver Arena closed because of a thunderstorm closing in, the most obvious noise in the first set was the chirping of trapped birds who'd taken shelter in the stadium.

The chirping intensified as Williams served in the sixth game of the second set, and she looked up angrily after her off-balance forehand from the baseline conceding her only service break of the match.

Williams finished with eight aces—all in the second set—and has dropped only 26 games in six rounds in a dominating run that included a 6-4, 6-1 win over No. 5 Maria Sharapova in the quarterfinals, a rematch of the 2015 final.

Jamie Murray and Brazil's Bruno Soares are through to the men's doubles final after a 6-3, 6-1 win over the French team of Adrian Mannarino and Lucas Pouille.

The first men's semifinal between defending champion Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer will open the night session.

Belau softball meeting Sunday

The Belau Amateur Softball Association will be holding a meeting this Sunday at the 13th Fisherman in Garapan to elect its new set of officers for the 2016 season.

The meeting is set for 1pm with BASA's board members and officials and Belau league players invited to attend the election.

The group will also discuss plans for the women's fast-pitch softball, the men's masters league, and the island-wide slowpitch competition.

For more information, contact outgoing BASA president Brian Adelbai at 484-3886 or Perry Besong at 483-5438. ***(PR)***

OL'ACES

From Page 32

forced to foul the former to stop the clock.

When he returned to the foul line, Nakashima this time delivered the clutch free throws, leaving Rollers 1 without a choice, but to heave for a triple to send the game in overtime. With no timeout left, Arciaga went for the quick inbound and threw a long pass intended for Jethro Cruz at the right sideline. However, Dennis Moses leapt for the interception, nearly colliding with Cruz midair and tapping the ball out. With the clock at .09 of a second, Cruz did another quick inbound and passed the leather to Arciaga, who threw up a prayer from the sideline, but his banked shot was way short, hitting just the board.

It was a sorry loss for the Rollers 1, which had the psychological advantage against the Ol'Aces going into the semifinals following its 53-49 win in the elimination.

Moses led the Ol'Aces upset against Rollers 1 after scoring 14 points, including back-to-back baskets that gave his team cushion after Rollers 1 forced a standoff, 46-all. Moses shots were all putbacks. Wilfredo Francisco added a layup after Moses' two straight baskets, while Dalton Dancoe hit two charities to keep the Rollers in the game, 48-52, going into the last two minutes of the match.

The opposing teams then traded turnovers in a couple of plays, while the Rollers muffed important free throws that could have changed the outcome of the game. Cruz and Dancoe combined for 0-for-4 before June Alipio made a pair to move Rollers 1 within 2, 50-52. An incomplete and-1 play from Moses and a split from Aiferson Atan gave the Ol'Aces a 55-50 advantage, which Cruz brought down to 3 after nailing an off-balance shot.

Cruz had a chance to tie the match after Atan lost possession at the baseline with Arciaga and Darag pressuring him, however the former missed on his coast-to-coast drive and the Rollers 1 was pressured to give up a couple of fouls to stop the clock.

Meanwhile, the Ol'Aces-Sonics title tiff will be played at 7:30pm after the 6:30pm championship game in the women's division between Sun Palace and Lob City.

Ol'Aces 57—Moses 14, Norita 12, Nakashima 9, Atan 6, Castillo 4, Cristobal 4, Francisco 4.

Rollers 1 54— Arciaga 9, Darag 8, Cruz 8, Deocares 7, Factor 6, Dancoe 6, Alipio 5, Ellama 2, Kwon 2.

Scoring by halves: 26-24, 57-54.

AGAPE

From Page 32

deficit to 7, 19-12. The Torchbearers lost the twin-digit advantage as Cai and Chen went scoreless in the third and Tianrui Zhang, Tychicus En, and Enlin Zou combined for only two field goals and one free throw.

However, that was the closest that GCA could get, as it failed to light up the board in the final canto, while Cai finished strong, adding 6 more points. Chan also tallied 6 markers in the fourth quarter, while Lue Xiong chipped in 4.

In other results last Tuesday, the Geckos also led from start to finish to begin their title defense on a winning note.

SIS won last year's boys middle school championship after routing Mt. Carmel School in the finale, 44-27. MCS, on the other hand, prevailed in the girls finals after downing GCA, 28-12.

Mt. Carmel also played in the opening day against Seventh Day Adventist, but results of the girls and boys division matches last Tuesday were unavailable at press time.

Games in the middle school league are played every Tuesday and Thursday with the participating teams playing in double-round robin elimination. Playoff matches are scheduled from March 1 to 4 with the format yet to be determined. There are six teams in the boys division and only three in the girls.

Yesterday, MCS' boys team was slated to meet GCA at the former's court, while the two other matches featured SIS vs Agape and SDA vs SCS.

ACS 37—Cai 15, Chen 13, Xiong 4, Zhang 2, En 2, Zou 1.

GCA 12—Aquino 8, S. Kim 2, Hahn 2.

Scoring by quarters: 10-2, 14-4, 19-12, 37-12.

OLEAI

From Page 32

Palacios baseball field and the Oleai track and field— inside the Oleai Sports Complex.

Blanco said a project worksheet was written to address the damage sustained by the following facilities. Soudelor battered Saipan with tornado-like winds and heavy rains on Aug. 2 last year.

Meanwhile, Northern Marianas Sports Association executive director Tony Rogolifoi said that updates on the rehabilitation is welcome news to the sports community, especially to the Saipan Little League and Saipan Baseball League, which are already behind in the opening of their respective seasons.

"I also talked to [Capital Improvement Projects program coordinator] Vicky Villagomez and discussed about the money. She told me that the money is already there and the documents are in the works," said Rogolifoi.

He added he also asked Villagomez if it is possible for NMSA to first finance the renovations just to get things going.

"We are just hoping to expedite the process since some baseball leagues are hoping to kick off in February. I asked Vicky if NMSA could begin funding the project then get reimbursed for the money used. She said no, since there's money allocated for it."

Villagomez assured Rogolifoi that the project would start soon once the RFP gets published in the newspapers and contractors submit their bids.

CNMI vs Guam Clubs in Friendly Games

PHOTOS By GUAM FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

The CNMI's Jeraldine Castillo, right, dribbles ahead of two defenders from Bud Light Women's Soccer League 2015 spring champions Lady Rovers during their friendly game at the GFA National Training Center in Dededo, Guam early this month.

The CNMI's Gabrielle Race, right battles a Quality Distributors FC player for possession.

Jeralyn Castillo tries to lead a CNMI offensive attack.

The CNMI's Lyka Sally keeps a tight watch on a Lady Rovers player.

The CNMI's Dianne Pablo, left, receives a pass from her teammate.

The CNMI's Gillian Villagomez, left, uses her knee to beat a Lady Rovers player to the ball.

The CNMI's Chloe Salvosa dribbles in front of a Lady Rovers defender.

The CNMI's Elaine Enriquez, left, dribbles to the sideline away from a defender from Bud Light Women's Soccer League fall season champion Quality Distributors FC.

CNMI goalie Chevy Kate Alipio steps into the play to prevent a Quality Distributors FC from scoring.

The CNMI's Katrina Costales, left, shadows a Quality Distributors FC player.

Durant, Thunder win thriller over Timberwolves

PAGE 28

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Aguero sends Man City into League Cup final

PAGE 29

Ol'Aces vs Sonics in finale

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The Ol'Aces' Aiferson Atan, left, challenges the defense of the Rollers 1's Jun Alipio during the second half of their semis game in the Tan Holdings holiday caging yesterday at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The Ol'Aces played steadier in the homestretch to pull off a 57-54 victory against Rollers 1 in their semis game in the boys U19 division of the 2015 Tan Holdings Christmas Basketball Tournament yesterday at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Nak Nakashima knocked in a pair of free throws in the last 3.3, while the Rollers' Mike Arciaga missed a desperation trey, allowing the Ol'Aces to escape with the close win and set up their winner-take-all title showdown against the Sonics tomorrow.

Nakashima's pair of free throws came after he muffed his first two attempts from the foul line with the Ol'Aces holding on to a 55-54 advantage. He stepped into the stripe first in the last 6 seconds of the game and after going 0-for-2, there was a battle for the rebound and one of the three players contesting for the ball tapped the leather toward the right corner of the court in front of the Ol'Aces bench. Nakashima then picked up the ball ahead of John Darag and Arciaga and the latter was

See OL'ACES on Page 30

Agape, SIS draw first blood

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Agape Christian School and Saipan International School had winning debuts in the middle school division of the 2015-2016 Coalition of Private School Sports Association Basketball League which opened last Tuesday at the various school courts on Saipan.

Agape dominated Grace Christian Academy, 37-12, at the Eagles turf in Navy Hill, while SIS hosted Saipan Community School and also cruised to a 37-22 victory. Both matches were in the boys division.

Dawei Cai gave the Torchbearers a good start in the six-team division, as he scored a game-high 15 points. Haoyu Chen also finished in double figures in Agape's season opener, firing 13.

Agape used its ceiling advantage to take control of the game right at the get-go en route to its 25-point winning margin.

Cai knocked in three field goals and outgunned the entire Eagles crew to lift the Torchbearers to a 10-4 lead. Chen drilled the two other baskets for Agape, while GCA's lone field goal came from Claude Aquino.

Agape slowed down in the second period, making only 4 markers off Chan's 2 points and Shonyou Du and Cai's splits, but the Eagles had another 2-point production from Aquino's second field goal, allowing the Torchbearer to build a double-digit lead at the break, 14-6.

At the resumption of the match, GCA finally managed to outscore Agape, 8-5, behind Aquino's 6 points and Sejin Kim's deuce, and cut the

See AGAPE on Page 30

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Agape Christian School players and coach Noel Puno, standing right, pose for a group photo before heading to Grace Christian Academy to play their debut game in the middle school division of the COPSSA caging last Tuesday.

Oleai complex rehab documents in the works

JON PEREZ
Water enters the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium due to its leaking roof. The facility will undergo repair this year once a grant from FEMA is released.

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The paperwork needed to start the rehabilitation and other improvement projects at the Oleai Sports Complex is now being processed, according press secretary Ivan Blanco.

Blanco said the Governor's Office had already received the money from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and is now awaiting release to begin the renovation project.

"The scopes of work were written by a FEMA project specialist, however, the government needs to compile the necessary documentation to begin an invitation to bid or request for proposal," Blanco told Saipan Tribune.

FEMA has approved a grant amount of $488,556 for the Oleai Sports Complex project and this was obligated on Dec. 10 last year. "The funds have been allotted and ready for obligations," added Blanco.

FEMA helped prepare the documents and one of their inspectors checked the extent of the damages brought by Typhoon Soudelor to the facilities—Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium, Miguel "Tan Ge" Pangelinan softball field, Francisco M. "Tan Ko"

See OLEAI on Page 30